

THE OSTO LYMP IC TO URIST TRAP

VIC WINTERS:
ACCELERATED MEMORY CONSTRUCTION:
OBSTRUCTING ARCHITECTURE
“THE POST OLYMPIC TOURIST TRAP”

VIC WINTERS

Master Thesis

Accelerated Memory construction:
Obstructive Architecture
"the post Olympic tourist trap"



Promotor: Prof. Dr. Pieterjan Ginckels

Copromotor: Manou Van Den Eynde

KU Leuven, Faculty of Architecture, Master of Architecture

Academic year 2023-2024, Campus Brussels

Faculty of Architecture, Paleizenstraat 65, 1030 Schaarbeek

STUDIO SNOWFLAKE 2024

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Abstract

Stuck inside a system that is all-encompassing, and that holds thinking and acting captive in a predetermined way, contemporary society seems incapable of imagining alternatives. A feeling of hopelessness and an urge and inability to find ‘the new’ define this state of being. Melancholy overtakes the mind and traps the individual in a constant rebooting of their own memories. Comfort is found in the safe cocoon of sameness and the known surroundings. To change or react to the system we are in seems increasingly difficult.

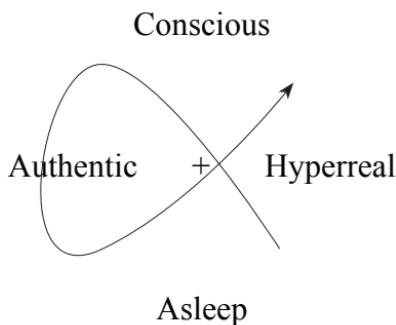
“Is there no alternative?”, asks Mark Fisher. In relation to this question, the concepts of desire and hyperreality are researched through multiple versions of a journey undertaken in a physical and virtual way. An accompanying graph frames this quest in a dual opposition: the vertical-axis illustrating a mental state, being ‘conscious or asleep’, and the horizontal-axis showing an awareness of the outside world, experiencing ‘authenticity or hyperreality’. A newly developed tool ‘Accelerated Memory Construction’ (AMC) and a compatible medium ‘Obstructing Architecture’ (OA) aid in the understanding and reworking of this journey.

AMC is the deliberate use of existing content, addressing the memory it contains, in the process of new content creation. By speeding up the artificial formation of meaning AMC questions the world that this content originates in. It builds on the concept of ‘Hauntology’, theorized by Mark Fisher. By adopting an ‘accelerationist’ attitude, Hauntology critiques and adopts the form of contemporary cultural content production, challenging it from within.

OA becomes the environment in which AMC is active. Obstructing Architectures are designed as to understand and respond to notions of desire in contemporary society, and the role architecture plays therein. Working together with AMC

the obstructed experience in OA could help create meaning in an accelerated way. OA builds on Heiner Mühlmann's theory 'Maximum Stress Cooperation' (MSC) and puts it in relation to Francois Lyotard's ideas concerning desire.

To understand reality and the way in which desire influences it, I combine AMC and OA to develop an architectural project called 'The Post Olympic Tourist Trap'. My initial research trip experience unlocked the conception of new knowledge. By accelerating and transforming the experience a new story is formed. This new story brings forward the memory that is created through the obstructions during the trip. The aim is to develop an architecture in which reality and desire are rearranged and a 'Hyperreal Consciousness' can grow.



Abstract



Introduction

In this book, I present the theoretical background of my thesis, which led to the creation of a film. The film aims to ‘develop an architecture in which reality and desire are rearranged, allowing a ‘Hyperreal Consciousness’ to grow’. The script, which serves as the backbone of the film, is included near the end of this book. It originated from the experiences of a research trip. This experience was accelerated and transformed using the newly created tool, Accelerated Memory Construction (AMC), and medium, Obstructing Architecture (OA).

During the jury presentation, the film will be shown without any additional explanation about the topics discussed in this book. The screening will be followed by a conversation, addressing any questions or comments that may arise from reading the book or viewing the film.





Hyperreal Consciousness™

Stuck inside a system that is all-encompassing and holds thinking and acting captive in a predetermined way, contemporary society seems incapable of imagining alternatives. A feeling of hopelessness, and an urge and inability to find ‘the new’ defines this state. Melancholy overtakes the mind and traps the individual in a constant rebooting of their own memories. Comfort is found in the safe cocoon of sameness and the known surroundings. To change or react to the system we are in seems increasingly difficult. Actions to counter it are absorbed and aimed back to only strengthen the system’s grip over the public. “Is there no alternative?”¹, asks Mark Fisher. Is it impossible to imagine a different future than the one wherein (capitalist) society is ruling us? In this thesis, methods and concepts are experimented with which could help question and develop a personal consciousness concerned with understanding the position you’re in and react to it by thinking in an alternative way. It tries to widen the scope and see things for what they are. The following texts present a coming-of-age through (field-)research, contemplation, theorization, and design in which viewpoints are formed and actions are taken. Different journeys, fictionalized or ‘real’, flow through each other and inform the development of one another. This first chapter can be seen as a SURFACE SCAN, a concept developed by Pieterjan Ginckels.² It is a desk research wherein I “will reconstruct the surfaces that surround us into a situated, incomplete, triggering state of the world”³. The SURFACE SCAN in this book introduces and elaborates on: the (in)significance of contemporary counterculture, an inescapability of hyperreality, why understanding desire is important, ‘accelerationism’ as a useful attitude, and it introduces the Studio Snowflake ss2024 Graph which helps positioning the different journeys throughout

this thesis on a mental and spatial spectrum. A wider context is shown wherein architecture will progressively play its part as an active member in the construction of realities.

“In the age of social media, personal expression has become the most valuable form of currency.”⁴ New institutions and media aren’t hierachal as they were during the heydays of, now stereotypical, counterculture in the 60’s and 70’s.⁵ Neoliberalism changed the structure of the ruling class. Techno-Capitalism, with Big Tech at its forefront, surpasses governments and restrictive action. Their business model embraces the aesthetics and ideas of protest, “being countercultural no longer means being counter-hegemonic.”⁶ The corporations have learned to absorb and use in their advantage the things that are meant to hurt them. As Mark Fisher puts it: “Capitalism incorporates previous rebellion, particularly creative and artistic rebellion, and then sells it back as this new spirit of capitalism.”⁷ Like everything else, counterculture is being commodified. Similarly, Slavoj Žižek points out: “anti-capitalism is widely disseminated in capitalism.”⁸ There is no fear on behalf of the ruling class in giving opposing voices a platform. It even helps to calm down the public. As an example of this ‘interpassivity’, coined by Robert Pfaller, the movie Wall-E criticizes its own viewers: “The film performs our anti-capitalism for us, allowing us to continue to consume with impunity.”⁹ It cools down the audience’s dissatisfaction towards their own position in society. The act of going against is time and time again proven to be a losing fight.

“the popularization of the avant-garde, ... the absorption of art into the administered spaces of capitalist commerce would gloss over its incompatibility with capitalist culture. He [Marcuse] had already seen capitalist culture convert the gangster, the beatnik and the vamp from “images [of] another way of life” into “freaks or types of the same life.”¹⁰

Only the image or music of the protester remains, but their visions for a different future dissolve as if an alternative is unimaginable. The general conception of what counteraction is seems to have changed into something more like cooperation. New figures, like ‘the edgelord’ or ‘the meme admin’ are attempts to try and tackle the system on its own field, with its own tools. With varied success, they’re creating a new voice building on what the internet has to offer. By adapting to the situation society is in, a larger impact on it could be performed that amplifies the means of contemporary life.¹¹



‘Only the image or music of the protester remains.’

Increasingly, the saturation of content through the exponential growth in the production of media is blurring the relation between meaning and object. As already defined by Jean Baudrillard in 1981, hyperreality is the moment wherein the simulation of reality no longer has a model of a ‘real’ it refers to. It is not reality that is the origin of the simulation, but it’s

like a “map that precedes the territory”¹². The simulation refers to another simulation, and the simulacrum is born. Any belief in authenticity loses its worth as everything is entrapped by the society that surrounds it.



Jon Rafman. AI generated image published on @ronjrafman.

“... we’ve lost count of how many times the question “how is this real?” Echoed in our collective subconscious. The intense excess of spectacle and global-level trauma being witnessed every day are bizarrely pushing the standards of ‘normal’ beyond conceivable bounds,”¹³

says Al Hassan Elwan. How surroundings are perceived, through different layers of reality creates a blurring and disbelief in the experienced world. Putting hope in disconnection only

reveals the unbreakable chain. As brought up as an example in *Simulacra & Simulation* by Baudrillard, even the tribe living on a remote island is part of the constructed and artificial reality. The choice of leaving them without making contact puts them in a simulation much like that of Truman Burbank's televised life in *The Truman Show*, or a hidden camera prank television program. They become a study object placed under a glass dome, for the rest of the world to enjoy and project their fantasies on.¹⁴ But for the one on the island it is harsh reality surrounding them. This difference in perspective is illustrated by the Japanese soldier Hiroo Onoda. He defended his position on Philippines' Lubang Island for almost 30 years after the second world war ended. He believed his objectives were true and of utmost importance. For the rest of Japan and the world, news about him was just a temporary reminder of a painful past.¹⁵ This Sisyphean task, this fight against windmills, brings up the melancholy for a romantic ideal. The hopeless war, the imagined enemy, how beautiful fighting for something insignificant can be. But in times of chaos choosing your fight is crucial. Recalibrating your perspective and realizing the position you're in creates the consciousness needed. The alternative is investing precious energy in a long-lost war. Hiroo Onoda's enemy had already gone, but in his imagined fight real lives were taken. The other soldiers in his squad, and inhabitants of the Island were lost because of the unconditional belief Onoda had in his own reality.

What is it then we want? Where to point our heads to? Everything is created to try and catch attention. This process blinds meaning or direction behind its bright lights. The bombardment of content is successful in pushing all other things aside. The distraction by content dictates every decision made. Still, it's not only pleasure that is longed for. As expressed by Bernadette Corporation in their film *Get Rid Of Yourself*, the dirty and distasteful parts of society form the chaos people want to immerse themselves in:

B
C

They say, "another world is possible." But I am another world. Am I possible? I am here, living, stealing doing cocaine, subtracting myself from the bad movie of urban love stories, inventing weapons, elaborating the complex constellation of my relations, building the Party. They say "another world is possible." But we do not want another world, another order, another justice : another logical nightmare. We do not want any global governance, be it fair, be it ecological, be it certified by Porto Allegre. We want THIS world. We want this world as chaos. We want the chaos of our lives, the chaos of our perceptions, the chaos of our desires and repulsions. The chaos that happens when management collapses. Capitalism defeated traditional societies because it was more exciting than

they were, but now there is something more exciting than Capitalism itself : its destruction.

What we desire is complex, but again and again belittled into a constant urge for pleasure. Desire is seen as something we should free ourselves from, to try and live inside a desireless and caring world. But the ‘outside’ of contemporary society that is often imagined doesn’t exist. And the people proclaiming it aren’t conscious about their own aversion to this outside.

“It is now helpful to look at this quote by Jacques Lacan, which references the Hegelian dialectic of the beautiful soul (*belle âme*). The beautiful soul fails to see its own evil, unconsciously projects it onto the world and sets out to “cure” it - an undertaking that is not that different from those of theological or religious fundamentalism.”¹⁶

The evil is inside of you. The acknowledgement thereof changes the moralizing pointing finger and turns it around. A necessary annoyance. The distasteful belief in one’s own impunity only nourishes a separation from the people reached out to. This exalted distance was infamously put into words by Jean-Francois Lyotard in a critique on, often, leftist intellectuals:

“‘ah, but that’s alienation, it isn’t pretty, hang on, we’ll save you from it, we will work to liberate you from this wicked affection for servitude, we will give you dignity.’ And in this way you situate yourselves on the most despicable side, the moralistic side where you desire that our capitalized’s desire be totally ignored, forbidden, brought to a standstill, you are like priests with sinners, our servile intensities frighten you, you have to tell yourselves: how they must suffer to endure that! And of course we suffer, we the capitalized, but this does not mean that we do not enjoy, nor that what you think you can offer us as a remedy — for what? — does not disgust us, even more. We abhor therapeutics and its Vaseline, we prefer to burst under the quantitative excesses that you judge the most stupid. And don’t wait for our spontaneity to rise up in revolt either.”¹⁷

How can we construct our self-consciousness when desire is bound to both pain and pleasure? Is it about being freed from pleasure or to understand pain in desire?¹⁸ Contemporary life seems overtaken by the creation of moments of pleasure. Moments made by technology that constantly attracts our attention. New inventions' initial goals move from purpose- to profit creation. It's how the internet was created by the military for communicative purposes, to evolve into something that lets you watch other people react to funny videos. "The unintended side effects of technology dictate our future"¹⁹. Countless times a day, without a break, our senses are stimulated. It seems impossible to outrun or understand the stimuli as they move so fast and appear in such great numbers. What we wish from these distractions is unclear. The only thing we know is; we want more.

Jenny Holzer; from *Survival* (1983 – 1985), 1985.



So, how to 'counter-culture' within hyper-reality? How to construct self-consciousness and understand desire? Nick Land infamously pleads for acceleration in its most violent form.

According to him the creative destruction inherent in capitalism will cause the implosion of its structure; “there is no distinction to be made between the destruction of capitalism and its intensification”²⁰. It’s a submission to the system, without taking into account the collateral damage it will cause. On the opposite side, the disbelief that something different will happen while continuing the same path causes Mckenzie Wark to question the strength inherent in the acceleration. Ridiculing the given solution as: “If there appears no forces that might divert history onto another path, then one could double down on the faith in the current course working out alright in the end”²¹. Can and should we catch up to speed with techno-capitalism and in doing so try to make culture perform a prominent role as a means to create a consciousness of the contemporary? In Mark Fisher’s version of accelerationism, a philosophical movement popularized in the 2010’s, multiple aspects come together.

“Accelerationism [...] was seen by Fisher and others as an analysis of the ever-increasing speed of technological progression under capitalism which sought to understand how this speed was affecting human cultural production and the production of subjectivity. These accelerationist writers observed that, whilst capitalism continues to develop at exponentially greater speeds, we as the contemporary subjects of capitalism cannot keep up with the system we find ourselves enclosed within. As a result, culture stalls and causes drag on the system itself, which responds by pacifying our desires through superficial means and leads us to languish at the end of history.”²²

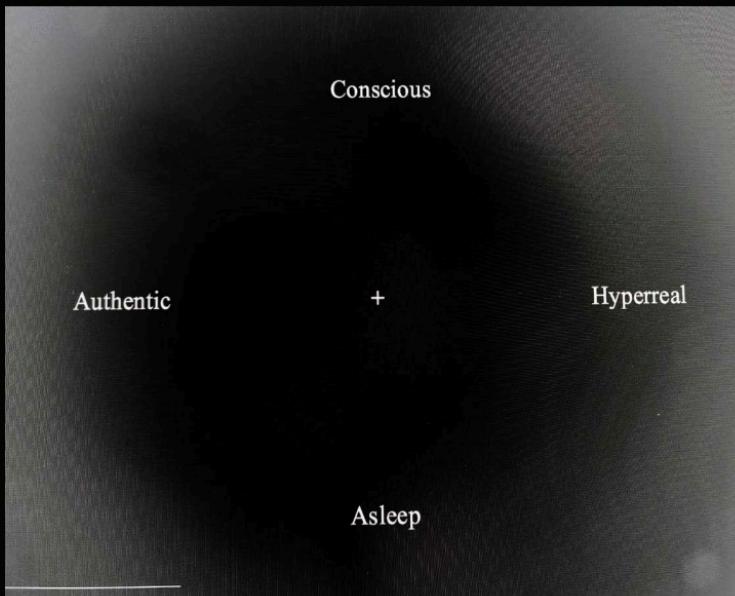
Today, speed seems endless and progress is believed to be endless. All hope is put in the infinite growth of economic and technologic prosperity. Saturated with content the disillusion continues. “All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered”²³. What choice do we have but dip in the constant flow coming at us? Can culture transform and reinvigorate the system instead of stalling it? The start of an answer to these larger-than-life questions could lie in the process

of getting to know how to position in- and look at contemporary life. While using architecture as a means to explore, the process of finding a position informs the further development of this thesis.

To conclude this chapter the Studio Snowflake ss24 graph is introduced. It is indebted to the DOOM + DREAM opposition created by Pieterjan Ginckels. “DREAM—understood as the agency of blogosphere—is countered by its conceptual antagonist DOOM as the balancing agency to accelerate the dreadful flipping within a radically saturated culture.”²⁴ In ‘Radical Saturation: Untitled States of Doom’ Ginckels develops a way to accelerate the process of flipping between states of doom or dream and break loose from being stuck in what he calls ‘the render trap’. A trap of being stuck inside the culture that is confronted “because of a lack of new ideas or an inability to choose an option and act upon it, given a lack of instruments or resources”²⁵. In DOOM, DREAM is counteracted through accelerating or ‘radically saturating the weapons and tactics of architecture [as] an exit strategy, making architects producers of the poetics and politics of the catastrophic.’²⁷ DOOM + DREAM is in this thesis rebuilt into an ‘attitude spectrum’ on which to position the changing dynamics concerning a personal state of being. This positioning isn’t straightforward. It implies an introspection that is uncompromisingly honest. Therefore, the spectrum is used throughout this thesis as the backbone of an evolving formation rather than a static judgement. To be able to change positions and reflect upon this change is key in understanding which path is followed. The graph builds on the worldview and questions put forward in the previous text. It focusses on two aspects in which an opposition is shown: the vertical-axis illustrating a mental state, being ‘conscious or asleep’, and the horizontal-axis showing an awareness of the outside world, experiencing ‘authenticity or hyperreality’. The movement on this graph, the struggle to find a position to take in, is what informs the creation of an architecture in which desire and reality are rearranged. This is the defining process documented in this thesis.

Hyperreal Consciousness

Studio Snowflake ss2024 Graph.



NOTES

- 1 Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism* (London: Zero Books, 2009).
- 2 Pieterjan Ginckels, “Radical Saturation Untitled States of Doom” (Doctoral thesis, KU Leuven, 2018), 169.
- 3 Pieterjan Ginckels, “STUDIO SNOWFLAKE,” KULeuven, consulted on 1 June, 2024, https://www.blog-archkuleuven.be/studio-snowflake-24-25/?filter_department=28.
- 4 Caroline Busta, “The internet didn’t kill counterculture—you just won’t find it on Instagram,” *Document*, January 2021, <https://www.documentjournal.com/2021/01/the-internet-didnt-kill-counterculture-you-just-wont-find-it-on-instagram/>.
- 5 Jack Self, “THE BIG FLAT NOW: Power, Flatness, and Nowness in the Third Millennium,” *032C*, December 2018, <https://032c.com/magazine/the-big-flat-now-power-flatness-and-nowness-in-the-third-millennium>.
- 6 Caroline Busta, The internet didn’t kill counterculture.
- 7 Mark Fisher, *Post Capitalist Desire* (London: Repeater Books, 2021), 109.
- 8 Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 12.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Mark Fisher, “Acid Communism”, *Purple Magazine*, ss2022, <https://purple.fr/magazine/the-future-issue-37-s-s-2022/acid-communism/>.
- 11 Al Hassan Elwal & Ruba Al-Sweel, “POSTPOSTPOST Opener,” in *REFLECTIONS ON A NEW AVANT-GARDE*, ed. POSPOSTPOST (Al Hassan Elwal & Ruba Al-Sweel) (2023), 24.
- 12 Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra & Simulation*, translated by Sheila Maria Glaser (The University of Michigan, 1994), 8.
- 13 Al Hassan Elwal, ‘In Defense of The Edgelord,’ in *REFLECTIONS ON A NEW AVANT-GARDE*, ed. POSPOSTPOST (Al Hassan Elwal & Ruba Al-Sweel) (2023), 9.
- 14 Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra & Simulation*, 1-43.
- 15 Werner Herzog, *The Twilight Zone* (London: Penguin Press, 2021).
- 16 Al Hassan Elwal, In Defense of The Edgelord, 24.
- 17 Mark Fisher, *Post Capitalist Desire*, 203-204.
- 18 Ibid., 28.
- 19 Shumon Basar, Douglas Coupland & Hans Ulrich Obrist, *The Age of Earthquakes: A Guide to the Extreme Present* (Blue Rider Press, 2015), 172.
- 20 Nick Land, “A QUICK-AND-DIRTY INTRODUCTION TO ACCELERATIONISM”, *Jacobitemag*, May 2017, <http://jacobitemag.com/2017/05/25/a-quick-and-dirty-introduction-to-accelerationism/>.
- 21 Mckenzie Wark, “The Drone of Minerva”, *Public Seminar*, November 2014, <https://publicseminar.org/2014/11/the-drone-of-minerva/>.
- 22 Mark Fisher, *Post Capitalist Desire*, 31.

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23 Marshal McLuhan, *The Medium is The Massage* (Penguin Books, 1967), 120.

24 Pieterjan Ginckels, Radical Saturation Untitled States of Doom, 94-95.

25 Ibid., 285.

26 Ibid., 95.

Schumacher's Accelerated Hyperreality Tour™

The following chapter builds on the ‘SPEED TRIP’ research method as developed by Pieterjan Ginckels. During the SPEED TRIP the obtained knowledge from the SURFACE SCAN is performed. Research transforms into “an immersive reality check of the state of the world”¹. In the tradition of Denise Scott Brown’s experiential tours in Las Vegas the SPEED TRIP tries to gain insights from things you thought you didn’t like and “authorizes us to look anywhere and actually learn from it”². The process reads as follows:

“you design, organize and execute a personal SPEED TRIP – a performative study trip in which you execute a deep dive into the real-world manifestations of our scanned surface ... Field trip becomes safari becomes rabbit hole. You are expeditioner, gathering evidence, and performer, developing a persona, or an attitude.”³

Not only the location is experienced, also a new attitude towards it is initiated. You become part of the surroundings you immerse yourself in, to better understand its implications. The SPEED TRIP becomes an “architecture as performance, performance as architecture”⁴.

Studio Snowflake SS24



The SPEED TRIP presented in this book stemmed from a quest for something authentic and real. What is left in this world of image saturation where everything seems fake and flat? Is hyperreality really inescapable? In media production a similar search for ‘the real’ can be experienced. It is expressed in for example the Instagram profile @crisisacting which uploads a daily post containing ten seemingly random amateur videos from all around the world. The most diverging topics are shown. From natural disasters to street musicians, the videos display its audience ‘real’ exceptional and/or normal glimpses of daily life. It replaces the feeling of not being able to connect to your surroundings, not being able to experience life, and offers an alternative inside the digital world. ‘Normal’ things are shown to be extraordinary and happening to anyone.⁵ Another example is the trend of imitating visual effect flaws in photography such as blurriness, over exposure or weird angles. The image becomes ‘an accident’, something unintentional, that is shared to the outside world in a pretend nonchalant way. It then acts as a ‘real’ glimpse into the life of the creator. A life with, constructed, flaws and randomness.⁶ The same happens in the intentional staging of pictures as paparazzi photography. A celebrity, or a non-celebrity, acts out the moment of being disturbed in their ‘natural’ surroundings. Carrying around soda and books they wear their hoods and sunglasses to ‘not be seen’. They create this same illusion of a look into the real life of stars and models.⁷ With our uncontrollable urge to replicate ‘naturality’, be it in technology, media, or whichever human activity, what is left of ‘the authentic’? Does a form of ‘realness’ still exist that is not driven by our techno-capitalist society? The SPEED TRIP tries to discover an encounter with ‘the real’ through an orchestrated path. It uses the Studio Snowflake ss24 Graph as a guide through different states of mind and connects them with places that can replicate these experiences in the physical world. The Field Guide’s introduction that was created beforehand went as follows:

“Complexity is ever increasing, more than the human brain alone can process. Tools are being created as an extension of life. They try to make the merging of digital and physical worlds possible. Like cyborgs we stroll through our days consuming larger quantities of information than ever before. Our interests are scattered and the inability to choose leads to the mix of everything into one. In this mess there is no right or wrong. Everything is fake or potentially true. What is considered authentic today isn't tomorrow. The increasing artificiality houses a search for nature, for something that is ‘real’. Beginning and end goal of this technological evolution seem to converge. We try to recreate what is around us. A self-regulating intelligent system. One that is able to react to what it encounters. In finding a way out of the chaos of contemporary life should we accelerate the cause or hide in ignorance?

Our daily exposure to digital media has made us more aware of the messages they try to convey. Techniques of storytelling have evolved. Who still believes the influencer? We want things to feel authentic. Like they were not meant in a certain way. Carrying a kind of casualness in their narrative, naive towards culture. There is a similarity in the way nature acts. No hierarchy, no system behind it, no simple interconnection between different parameters. Not like the computer we try to compare it to. But a complex interrelation, ungraspable for the modern human mind. It seems we seek shelter in this feeling of ‘realness’. In search for things that just happen, that aren't orchestrated. But in our capitalist society this is a tool for further commodification. A constant search for what authenticity means in its current state to then react to and use it. As we have become the publicity agency of our own identity, we're all involved. Developing the same tools that are used to mislead us.

The techno-capitalist society is not looking to slow down anytime soon. Every problem it creates is believed to be solved by its further development. The new will take care of the old. Slowing the process down only prolongs the climax of its final transformation. And as creative destruction is inherent to its workings this climax could mean collapse. Focusing on the acceleration may reveal the insides. The flight from it leads us right into its simulation. So, what is ‘real’ when everything is merged and fake? And does it even matter if you just believe it to be? There have been different tactics to achieve it and different goals to pursue it. An immersion in the ‘mechanisms of realness’ possibly will disclose its inner core.”

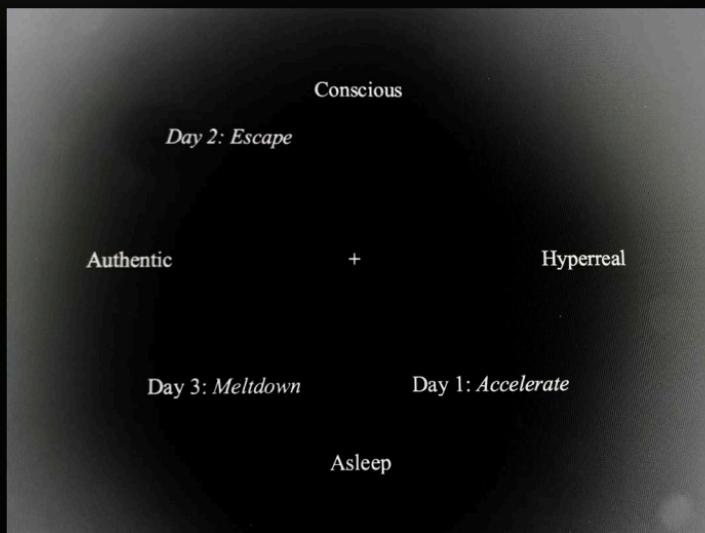
Schumacher's Accelerated Hyperreality Tour



Field Guide Cover.

The introduction was a first attempt in bringing together the topics discussed in the previous chapter of this book. It was mainly focusing on hyperreality, and accelerationism as a way out. By combining them, a search for a leftover of authenticity was proposed. This broader context were narrowed down within the following parts of the guide to clearly define the trip's initial goals and methods.

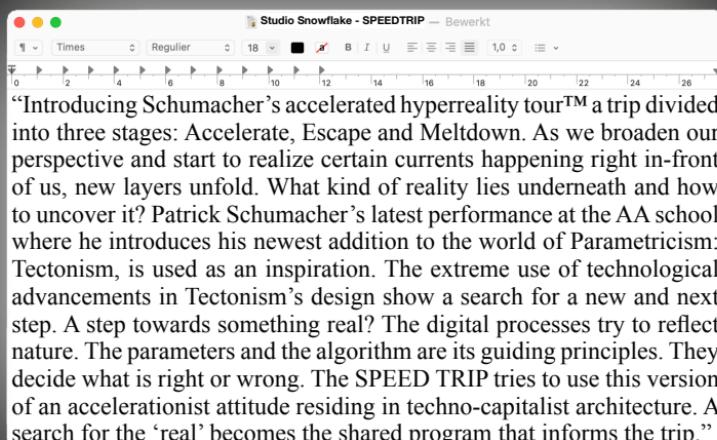
Studio Snowflake ss24 Graph with Field Guide overlay:
Accelerate, Escape, Meltdown.



Within the architectural field the figure of Patrick Schumacher seemed to be a combination of the thoughts expressed in the introduction. His quest for authenticity is illustrated in a technological optimism that he thinks should be the driving force behind architecture today. There is a desire for something natural or real in this idea of technological progress, similar to the previous examples in the text. In many cases the end goal of his practice is a mimicry of nature. This godlike search is encapsulated in the development of algorithms and AI. Surrendering decisions to a self-operating process becomes a *raison d'être*. Schumacher seeks truth in his version of the hyperreal world. By using computer power, he develops an

Schumacher's Accelerated Hyperreality Tour

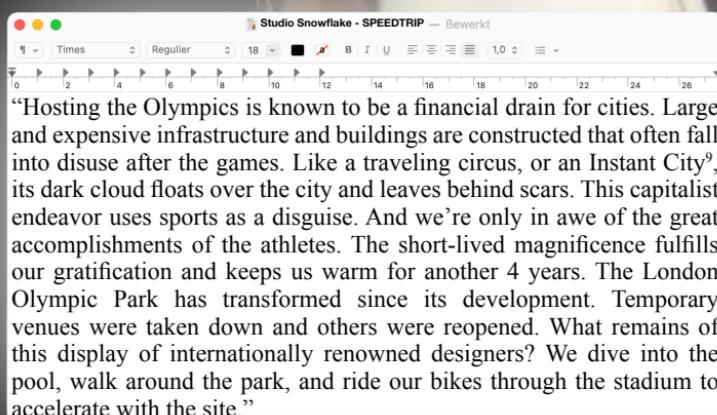
‘Architecture for the Twenty-First Century’⁸ for which he uses the overarching term Parametricism. He does this with an attitude imbued with progressive thinking and acceleration towards the future. This attitude seems to seamlessly align with the techno-capitalist world in which he operates. A world that is continually strengthening its grasp on society and is impossible to stay outside of. The introduction in the Field Guide explaining the SPEED TRIP’s intentions read:



The SPEED TRIP became a search for the “real”, guided by Schumacher’s attitude and worldview. A mental formation was staged in various steps. Each part accompanied by a different sentiment towards the acceptance of this new attitude and a compatible location. The following sections go deeper into the different days and parts of the SPEED TRIP.

DAY 1: ACCELERATE

Day 1 was an adoption of the attitude and the saturated world Schumacher lives in. An adoption of his acceleration. The location chosen for this: Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. Zaha Hadid Architects, where Schumacher is principal architect, designed one of its most iconic buildings, the London Aquatics Centre. The Olympic Games infamously accelerate a city and site into a transformation that happens outside of its normal pace. It gathers money and power into a delimited area for a short amount of time producing a fast simulation of a capitalist undertaking. In all the tumult that it creates this miniature version of the capitalist world is hidden behind one of the biggest broadcasting events happening every four years. A vague connection between the televised reality and the human experience of the Olympics gives the IOC the ability to frame their image in whatever way they want.

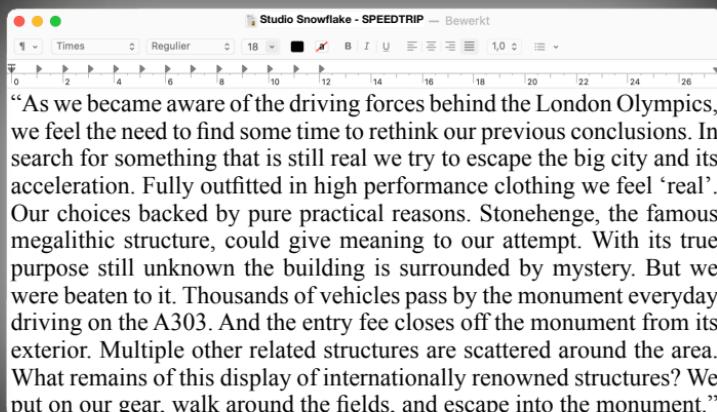


The place seemed suitable for an immersion in the presupposed attitude. Underlying realities could be experienced in real time and had the ability to show themselves in a further evolved form. When spending the first day of the SPEED TRIP in the Olympic

Park, accelerating with it went surprisingly well. After some time on the site, certain negative preconceptions about the place diminished and acceptance increased. The buildings in the park were admirable in scale and execution. It was the surroundings, the developments that were built after the Games and the park had set in motion, that were difficult to process. Various tall residential towers, office buildings, a shopping center, a station, etc. Things that were meant to enliven the left-out North-East-London neighborhood but seemed to only serve the project developer. Still, walking around in the Olympic center-point of new development with all its glorious sports buildings and greenery seemed to push away the bad thoughts. The Olympic formula worked! By combining sports and spectacular buildings, other underlying real estate operations remained hidden. The mesmerizing image-building was effective in simulating an idea of a world that would profit everyone who encountered the Olympic Games. A multi-beneficial place where profit and ethics could come together. The London Aquatics Centre was the highlight of the day. After the games the pools' large stands were broken down and swimming became freely accessible for only £7. Although its wings were cut its shape still had an impact on the park. A dip in the water showed how this 269-million-pound building was actually a real place. Opening its two and a half pools for the public it tried its best to fulfill some kind of social duty. But hyperreality still insisted. The glass was covered with blue stickers hiding away any glimpse going in or out. And the staff's inability to explain the ticketing options created some Kafkaesque situations. All the initial glamour surrounding the pool seemed to have evaporated. What was left of the promise of a glooming future? When heading back to the Airbnb mixed feelings surfaced. Day 2 may have come too soon. The accelerated saturation did not lead to overload but left a taste for more. Something seemed off. The image of an Olympic ideal didn't come to its fully manifested form. Not sure if this was a good or bad thing, preparations were made for what lied ahead.

DAY: 2 ESCAPE

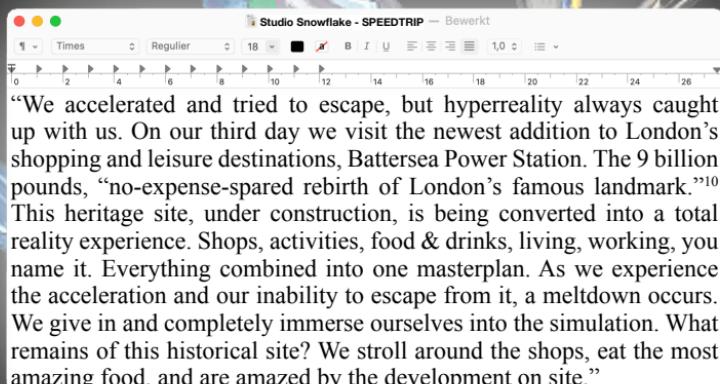
Day 2 was a flight from Schumacher's attitude and the saturated world. An attempt to escape from the acceleration. In search of an authentic place and experience a prime example of Western European ancient architecture became the next stop on the journey. Stonehenge was constructed in different phases connecting multiple other heritage sites throughout the surrounding area. Before there was any mention of today's cultural and social situation, groups of people used Stone Henge in varying symbolic and practical ways. Was there a possibility of a site free from contemporary cultural pollution? While trying to buy entrance tickets on the website some revealing aspects were already unfolding. A new tunnel was to be built underneath the site instead of the highway that was passing right next to the structure. Was its aura reduced to nothing more than a roadside monument? The fields and other historical sites around it could possibly reinvigorate the myth surrounding the ruins.



With high hopes of encountering some remaining fragments of an authentic reality a long journey was set off to find the relics of a long gone past. Meanwhile there was a chance of escaping the sped up situation occurring in the city. A train ride from Waterloo Station to Salisbury and a hasty bus driver led to the first of many sites surrounding Stonehenge. Through rain and wind, the road was long and muddy. Very much real, and cold. Sheep staring and grazing led the way in between the fences and grassy hills. But as the massive ruins became visible in the distance so did the world surrounding it. Long lines of visitors merged in a fata-morgana-like way, with cars speeding by along the highway, and vans of solstice fanatics parked next to the inland road. When closing in on the monument triple fencing systems separated the outside fields from the inner rings. The hard work of English Heritage volunteers and employees kept intact the staging of this unreal environment. A simulated historical artifact that was uncovered by its hyperreal surroundings. The perfectly rounded hills, obscuring fences and confusing signs, paved the way past the surveillance systems into the electric busses bringing people back and forth from the visitors' center. There, the gift shop was nothing less than a portal between two worlds. As the highlight of the experience people filled their bags with goodies and gifts replicating the Google image of the monument. Their memories made tangible and replicable for future stories to be told. A passing through the circular historical video loop immersion finished of the simulation and lead to the replicated ancient huts outside. A failed escape from hyperreality was complete. If it wasn't possible to escape, what other road was there to take? Escaping led to meltdown and powerlessness. Something was wrong with turning away from the accelerated situation in the city. It felt naive to have thought this would even be possible. The way back gave time to ponder on what was more to come.

DAY 3: MELTDOWN

Day 3 was a blind surrender to the acceleration and the saturated world. The escape failed miserably, so the first option of acceleration was reconsidered in a nonjudgmental way. The newly renovated Battersea Power Station became the stage for this last part of the journey. Malaysian developers used this well-known London monument as a backdrop on which to project the surrounding new buildings. Similar to the use of sports at the Olympic Games, the restoration of the dilapidated monument hides away the reality surrounding it. Instead of the criticality that infested day 1 the approach was not to condemn this place but to acknowledge what was happening. Experiencing it in the way it was intended.



Was this fakeness the new real? Turning things around could maybe bring back some balance. Authenticity was possibly laying right ahead all this time. Easier said than done surrender was not straightforward. The intention of the place is evident and nothing new: a shopping mall surrounded by luxurious apartments. But the way it was done felt different from other examples like the Westfield Shopping Mall next to the Olympic

Park. Battersea Power Station was transformed into a shopping center, but the shops did not scream for attention. A coordinated style for the shopwindows and signs, and a simple floor plan created a more discreet and 'casual' form of commercial luring. The mix of an authentic feeling next to shopping became even more complete and vague by using the power stations rough aesthetic. In the restored building they found the ideal partner. A 'real' backdrop for their spectacle. But more than just walking through the space people didn't seem to do. Shopping clerks were bored from greeting people in and out without selling a thing. The building served as a display rather than a real commercial center. People were just impressed by the glass, flashing lights and shiny products. The image was enough to satisfy their needs. Only the restaurants could lure in and realize some real transactions. Outside, the luxury apartments that were embracing the old building continued the trend. The glass facade of the 'Circus West Village' apartment building served as a display of inhabitants' terraces. Like a furniture store staging possible real-life situations, outsiders could look into the lives of the 'lucky ones' able to live next to a licensed monument.

Instead of finding bliss in ignorance a mismatch of thoughts and reality occurred. Not one of the standpoints adopted through the trip seemed to satisfy the search for the real. What could be the next step towards finding a suitable attitude? The three days, locations and mental states did not bring clarity on their own. Acceleration, the escape thereof, or the surrender to it weren't solving the mystery. But there was one corner on the graph left unexplored. This corner seemed to bring together all into one. If authenticity has faded, then hyperreality becomes the real. Realness is fakeness and the other way around. What is key seems to be the realization thereof. 'Being a conscious actor within hyperreality'. The different steps of the journey itself were necessary to bring about this attitude. The formation of a 'Hyperreal Consciousness' became the envisioned outcome of this thesis.

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Studio Snowflake SS24



There's no competition

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Schumacher's Accelerated Hyperreality Tour

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Schumacher's Accelerated Hyperreality Tour

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Schumacher's Accelerated Hyperreality Tour

Accelerated Memory Construction™

‘Accelerated Memory Construction’ (AMC) is the deliberate use of existing content, addressing the memory it contains, in the process of new content creation. By speeding up the artificial formation of meaning AMC questions the world that this content originates in. It builds on the concept of ‘Hauntology’¹, theorized by Mark Fisher. By adopting an ‘accelerationist’ attitude, Hauntology critiques and adopts the form of contemporary cultural content production, challenging it from within. AMC is used as a methodology, to imagine and shape a memory carried into a post-future. In the following chapter the deeper layers of AMC are explained to better understand the context in which it originated and what its use entails. The different aspects unfolded being: Hauntology and how its related to accelerationism, with a contemporary example: ‘corecore’, the relation between history and auto-fiction, and AMC’s connection with ‘Bootlegging’, and architecture.

Simon Reynolds posed the term ‘Hauntology’ on his blog in the 2000’s to clarify a new form of music production he, and others, observed, mainly in England. An observation, another blogger called Mike Powel, illustrated in 2006 and Matt Colquhoun included in his introduction to the re-edition of Mark Fisher’s book ‘Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology + Lost Futures’:

“This side of the twenty-first century, a growing number of bands and record labels were dedicating themselves to the ‘tracks and traces, absences and ideals’ of various twentieth-century sonic cultures, in a way that was both pleasantly nostalgic and affectively disturbing.

The sounds produced were technically pop music, ... albeit perverted to evoke “a degraded ideal”. But something interesting was happening here: it appeared this process of degradation was producing its own cultural mutations.”²²

Artists like Burial were able to grab strands of music, distorted by the environments they experienced them in and rebuild from these samples new relations that formed meaningful interactions. Opposed to that, Mark Fisher saw in The Arctic Monkeys or The Kaiser Chiefs a “connection between the reflexive impotence of pop and politics”²³ in Britain at that time. These bands were performing a kind of Capitalist Realism, a complacency with and an inability to think outside of the established system. They illustrated a ‘retromania’ the hauntological experiments were piercing through. Hauntology was positioned as a new form of postmodernism that could create tensions, instead of the frictionless juxtaposition of aesthetics as seen in the architecture of Las Vegas and Disneyland. But the term started to signify what it contested and was even despised as a melancholic denunciation. With the fall of other leftist initiatives like the occupy movement in the early 2010’s the no-alternative trope became ever more alarming. “Why hauntology in 2022?”, Matt Colquhoun asked.

“It is still necessary, still pressing that we find gaps in the seamless surfaces of ‘reality’. Identifying the desires that haunt us is the first step towards denaturalizing their shifts out of phase and materializing these persistent specters once and for all.”²⁴

As the retromania in contemporary cultural production continues, seen in for example the infinite recycling and accelerating trend cycles on TikTok, the quasi disco-cover-band-music by Bruno Mars, or the ‘heritage-ification’ of city center facades and monuments, the need to challenge this situation remains evident. A strategy to react from within this system, as did hauntology, is found in ‘accelerationism’, another now degraded term that became prominent and later dissolved in the 2010’s. Alex Williams was one of the people who theorized what this concept could mean:

“Williams’ initially unnamed position argued that the only worthwhile response to the stagnant self-referentiality of postmodernism was “to speed up the rate of fashion-flux to a point of irredeemable collapse” - not just comment upon culture but also intervene within it, purposefully midwifing this thing trying to be born. Williams later clarified that his intention was not to usher in ‘the downfall of capitalism’ recklessly and violently - or, indeed, western civilization, as many continue to assume is accelerationism’s ultimate goal - but to radically alter “the nature of the processes of capital itself and “the kinds of subjectivations [it makes] possible”.”⁵

Through the adoption and perversion of the tactics and handlings happening in contemporary content production the system that birthed it is challenged. A resent example of a seemingly progressed form of hauntology is ‘corecore’. At the beginning of 2023 it gained mainstream exposure on TikTok. Not long after, its use already collapsed under the pressure of the fast pace of culture today. #corecore was a hashtag used for 15 second videos that in its initial phase were montages of seemingly meaningless chaotic bombardments of content found online. In the process of its wider implication a feeling of melancholia became entrenched in the videos through the music and videos included. This melancholia could be related to the feeling explained in Capitalist Realism. Is there is no alternative? Being stuck inside a system that seems to have no other outcome became the feeding ground for sorrow.⁶ Instead of fleeing from the saturation online a total immersion in its meaningless relations became a form escapism. In a hauntological sense corecore expands existing content into non-meaning to reflect on what is already happening online. The duo y7, composed of Declan Colquitt and Hannah Cobb, calls this superimposing of material inside corecore a ‘hyperimposition’.

“If, in superimposition, the composing units still retain their existence as discreet and recognizable, then hyperimposition can be conceived of as a process in which the mass and saturation of composing units disintegrate the existing semiotic or formal distinctions altogether, leading to a semioblitzed aesthetic.”⁷



Collage of screenshots from corecore videos on TikTok
by Min Chen for Artnet.

Y7 sees in this ‘nonsensibility’ an attempt to “step back and see the bigger picture”⁸. The use of scale in the search for an explanation of the extreme and chaotic present. A present that we’re unable to comprehend because of its vastness and weirdness. Something Timothy Morton called the hyperobject. The larger-than-life things that are happening to the world around us create a sense of confusion and disillusion which was recreated in these 15 second TikTok videos.

“#corecore was a program of scale undertaken from an anti-anthropomorphic POV, an insensate delirium scanning an ultimately inconceivable hyperobject of communicative media; and yet it was also a program of yearning and melancholy; of cancelled futures, of attempts to reconcile with endcore’s cauterized horizons.”⁹

The total abolition of meaning and the immersion in the melancholy embracing nonsense of corecore surfaces a new relation

between history and fiction. If anything can become part of everything to create a story that isn't looking to tell something, what is left to explain? History is a tool commonly used by nations, people, companies etc. to construct a reason for their existence. From land claims to rules of conduct, people are influenced by the stories that live in their society. But these stories which are believed in as if they were hard truths are often only constructed realities, mashups of bits and pieces formed through the tradition of their telling. They tend to change according to the needs of their times. And in doing so can obstruct or aid the positive developments of their surroundings.

"History is not that which lies behind us in the past but rather that which occurs here with us in the present. History is the story of our own becoming, and in order to maintain that position history must engage in its own process of becoming as well."¹⁰

History and fiction are intertwined and if seen for what they are can become tools to shape reality. The tension between our belief in history and how it is malleable was already illustrated in George Orwell's book 1984 that came out in 1949. Winston Smith, working at the Ministry of Truth, was forced to consciously adapt his writings to make more sense of the past in the wake of current affairs. The constant changes dismissed histories' truth in the book. But it illustrated how the process of history creation negatively influenced what had come to a terrible climax in the time of writing the book. An adoration of a constructed history was the fuel for the nation-state the Nazi Germans created.¹¹

The vast amount of information in digital and digitalized archives has made history graspable at any moment and time. This creates an alternative present wherein the relation between time and history is separated.¹² When online it's not important when something has happened, moving between times is performed without difficulty. It's fast and easy to connect dots between times and moments that before seemed to not have any correlation. Chronology has evolved into algorithm driven lists of information where time has lost importance. Since Facebook's implementation of the 'News Feed' what the

algorithm records the individual is attracted to, dictates the next post they'll see on their timeline.¹³ Contemporary time has become fluid and malleable, companies are controlling it and users play along. Not only histories of countries or things are created. Today, everyone online is actively building their own image and history on a daily basis. Social media creates a world wherein life becomes an auto-fiction and everyone's a character in each other's stories.¹⁴ Collective POSTPOSTPOST calls the self-referentiality and constant referring to one another 'meta irony'.

"Meta irony hosts that edge where multiple truths can reside - and there's a sense of an increasing collective literacy in such domains. Never before in history have creators and audiences been so aware of each other's presence. Fiction is having a hard-time catching up to reality in the attention economy."¹⁵

The individual is now living inside a reality created by an amalgam of pieces of content coming from other individuals, real or fake. Chaos and cluelessness come with it and estrange people from a reality they used to believe in. Brands promoting products through 'user generated content' are one example of how everyone is playing along with the little stories that are put into the world. The content creator evokes a sort of casualness while visibly using a product online they are ought to promote. Brands try to infuse authenticity in what is in its core a product commercial. The creators and the audience play along and accept this web of narratives. They're in a constant play of emulating each other to feel more authentic, interesting, or real. A hyperreality builds up in the wake of this. The lived experiences and the commodification thereof become one, and there's no way to distinguish what's real or fake.

A constant collecting and exposure to content and media create a mashup of references and lived or imagined experiences. They merge and form a new reality in which the new stems from the mixing of the old. In image production we enter what Ana Viktorija Dzinic calls a time of 'post-photography'. Anything can be an image and the

Bella Hadid casually promoting her brand ‘Kin Euphorics’ on Instagram.



image can be made at any time or scale. Even a screenshot of a tweet that’s put in a new context is an image in itself. Anything is possibly content and has the potential to be used as such in varying contexts.¹⁶ Jack Self observes a flattened plane of cultural production where no hierarchy or centrality is possible on which this content operates and emerges. The speed and amount of information today lead to a new form of creating ‘the new’.

“The sheer volume of information available puts a lot of pressure on the speed of communication. Creative content must be understood instantly, otherwise there is no traction. The paradox of this output is that it must be familiar and uncomplicated, but also astonishing and new. To do this, creatives often combine well-known, but apparently unrelated, design categories. The more obscure the connection and the more familiar the archetypes, the more surprising the result. The negative space between references is the engine for novelty.”¹⁷

Keith Sonnier, Porte-Vue (1987) at Domaine de Kerguéhennec.
A 'Bootleg'.



An infinite reuse and repurposing leads to an intricate web of references that all house their own history and can be understood in relation to the sources they're imposed against. Like sampling in the production of music it's a method that is widely spread, but often done unconsciously. This act has infiltrated everyone's lives now that creating and putting together images has become a common practice done at any moment any day. Within the samples of music or the images used, a memory, or a mix of interrelations, is contained. By using the sample this memory is put to work. The spectator's frame of references is spoken to. When putting the references into contact with each other new relations can emerge. It is a constant layering of all these samples of culture you come across at any second.¹⁸

AMC is a practice observable in architecture. From the postmodernism of the 80's to the aesthetization of construction site materials in recent years. Piecing together meaning through interrelations is constantly performed consciously or unconsciously by architects and designers. To tell the story of a building other references are brought together to strengthen the narrative. The histories and fictions inside are used to construct a fitting backdrop for the program presented. Artist Pierre Huyghe makes these interrelations the base of his work. He creates 'ecologies' composed of many elements that produce their own artificiality. In his work After Life Ahead for Skulptur Projekte Münster in Germany he transformed an old ice rink and presented inside, among other things: "Ice rink concrete floor, Logic game, Ammoniac, sand, clay, phreatic water, bacteria, algae, bee, chimera peacock". In an interview with Emily McDermott he talks about the intentions of the project:

"I'm not interested in a few connected elements, but rather in their interdependence, how they react and adapt to variables, and whether these interdependencies are discernible or not ... it is a question of indiscernibility and unpredictability, something could arrive and you may or may not be [in the environment]. The point is not to confuse [the audience] for the sake of it, but to complexify where one thing is supposed to stop and where another begins. There are different self-generating patterns, ... each pattern has its own capacity and potential for change, its own unintentional variations. Because there are so many in proximity, they affect each other; they deregulate or re-regulate. They synchronize as well as engage in conflicts or dilemmas."¹⁹

The narrative that emerges from his putting together of objects and living things changes and adapts to the experience of the audience or the time of day. A constantly moving world that creates meaning. It is what Marshall McLuhan could call an 'anti-environment'. "Anti-environments, or countersituations made by artists, provide means of direct attention and enable us to see and understand more clearly."²⁰ They challenge the status quo and provide us the possibility to move from a "fixed point of view" into "gaining perspective"²¹. Putting things next to each other and letting them interact can tell something about the things themselves and about the new reality they create together.

Pierre Huyghe, ‘After Alife Ahead’ in 2017.



Inside the artificial reality that's constantly created, the future and past are intertwining. What's left is an auto-fiction of the lived experience. Instead of trying to return to a non-existing past of 'truth', "If everything is fake then let's tell great stories."²² 'Real life', whether online or offline, can be reused, adapted, and supplemented with other content and stories that add to the message reality is participating in. Fictionalizing and sequencing things together can bring about the new. AMC tries to adopt this new relation to fiction and create meaning within the existing chaos. It builds a future looking back on its own memories. In the following chapters AMC is further developed and put into practice. Its philosophy is used to address the contemporary, by using the past.

"the past hasn't "already happened". The past has to be continually re-narrated, and the political point of reactionary narratives is to suppress the potentials which still await, ready to be re-awakened, in older moments."²³

NOTES

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- 23 Mark Fisher, “Acid Communism”, *Purple Magazine*, ss2022, <https://purple.fr/magazine/the-future-issue-37-s-s-2022/acid-communism/>.



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71



Stills: “Life Sim - IDL” (2015), Music Video by Daniel Swan.

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Stills: *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005), Directed by Werner Herzog.

And all this built
upon a general hostility,

because the awakened ones

are the nightmare
of those still asleep.





Stills: Get Rid of Yourself (2003), Directed by Bernadette Corporation.

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Stills: Koyaanisqatsi (1982), Directed by Godfrey Reggio.

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And I'm just gonna start off by saying,
like, if you get it, you get it.

wild video presentation, The Zuck
not only rebranded Facebook in its honor

78



Stills: THE METAVERSE IN JANKY CAPITALISM (2023),
Directed by Daniel Felstead.

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DRIVE THRU PHARMACY



80



Accelerated Memory Construction



Stills: In Order Not To Be Here (2002), Directed by Deborah Stratman.

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SAY NO BELIEVE in BRITAIN

Accelerated Memory Construction

RobinHoodUKI

EU.COM

SAY
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SAYNOTOEU.COM

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SAYNOTOEU.COM

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Stills: Hypernormalisation (2016), Directed by Adam Curtis.

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84



SCORE

1000

Accelerated Memory Construction

LEVEL

1000 COMBO
MULTIPLIER x 2

D'UNE SÉRIE DE NOUVEAUX JEUX VIDÉO.



85

Stills: Zidane, un portrait du xxie siècle (2006),
Created by Douglas Gordon & Philippe Parreno.



Accelerated Memory Construction



87



Stills: “In my top 5 (s/o @nitenpunk)” (2024),
created by @maltdisney



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EN RE
PENSANT
CELÀ :

it's silly to die for an image.

Learn to see
in order to hear



Here, a French family
watches television.



Each time, the new
replaces the old



Elsewhere, images of
the Palestinian Revolution.



Keeping, more
the memory



88



where each is both
and the copy of t

A
ICI
ET
AILLEURS

here,
elsewhere.

Accelerated Memory Construction



next image
the before.



or less,
of it.



the original
the other.



Others are the "elsewhere"
to our "here."



Stills: Ici + Ailleurs (1976), created by Anne-Marie Miéville and Jean-Luc Godard.

"is it easier to imagine the end of love
than it is to imagine the end of
the internet?"

Studio Snowflake SS24

- Aristotle



People pay to watch me sleep.

90

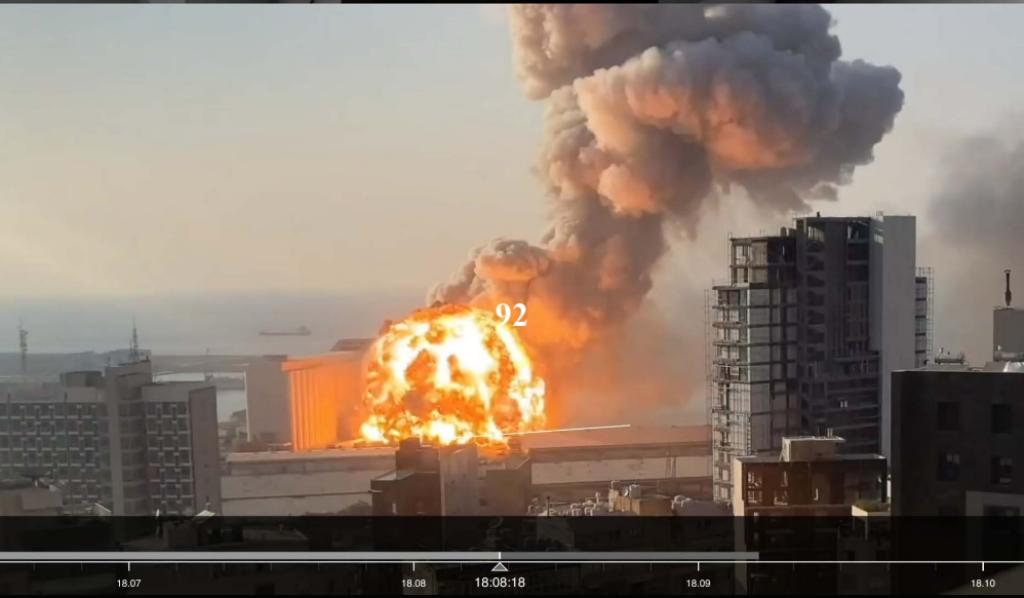
kings and queens of the rizz

Accelerated Memory Construction

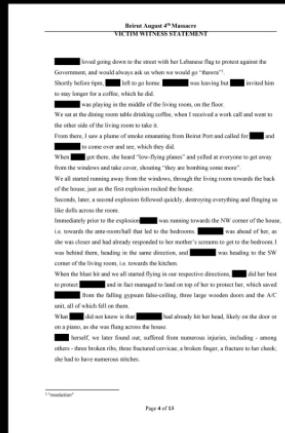
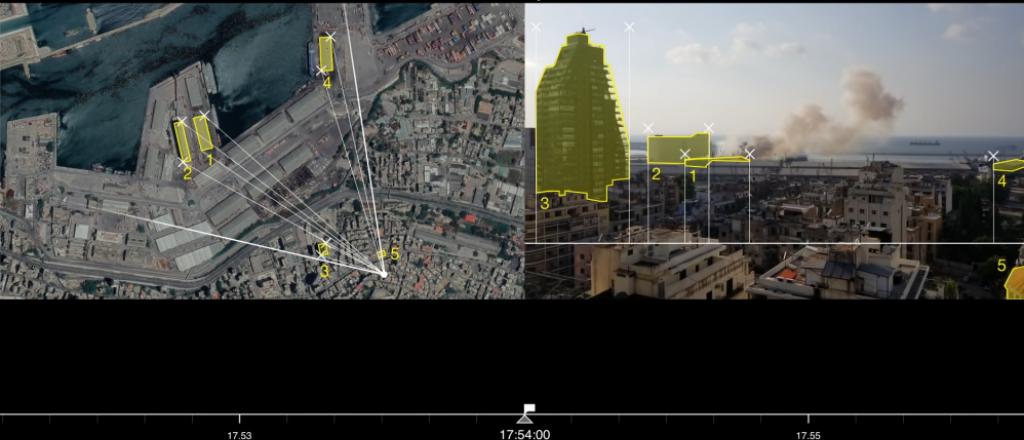


Stills: Lorecore The Final Chapter (2023), Created by Shumon Basar & y7.

Studio Snowflake SS24



Accelerated Memory Construction

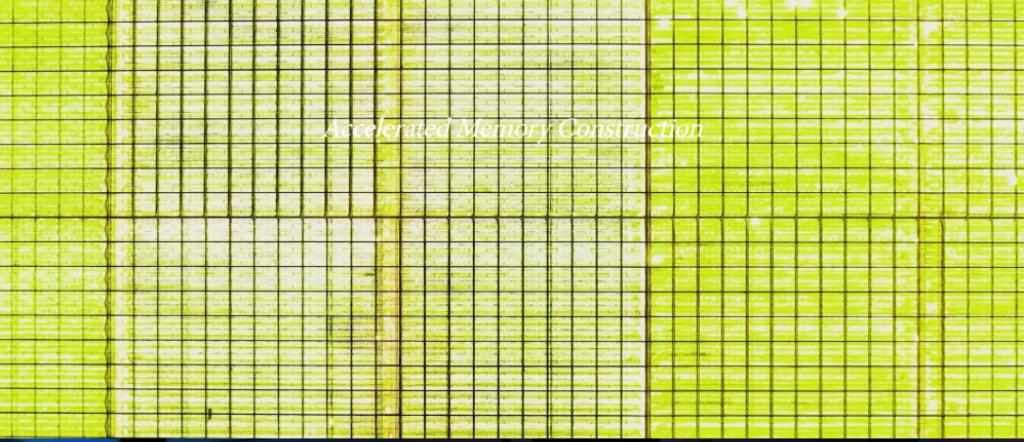


Stills: The Beirut Port Explosion (English) (2020),
Created by Forensic Architecture.



[KOREAN] Is it that you don't like humans? It's not about what I like or don't like.

Accelerated Memory Construction



Stills: Solstice (2021), directed by Case Miller.

Obstructing Architecture™

Obstructing Architectures (OA) are designed as to understand and respond to notions of desire in contemporary society, and the role architecture plays therein. In the longing for obstruction, in the acceptance of the struggle, there's possibly a way to understand desire and its complexities. Within these moments of obstruction, where desire is challenged, new realities or realizations unfold. OA builds on Heiner Mühlmann's theory 'Maximum Stress Cooperation' (MSC) and puts it in relation with Francois Lyotard's ideas concerning desire, as expressed in Mark Fisher's posthumously published lectures 'Post Capitalist Desire'. What is desire(d)? And how does our understanding of desire affect the choices and position we take towards our surroundings? OA tries to function as a medium in which complexities related to desire surface. Working together with AMC the obstructed experience in OA could create meaning in an accelerated way. OA becomes the environment in which AMC is active. In the following chapter desire and MSC are confronted, and Mühlmann's theory is seen in the context of Stephan Trüby's expansion of it called 'Exit Architecture'.

"But to be free from capital would be to be free from desire!"¹ proclaims Mark Fisher. And to be free from desire would be to understand what desire is and what is desired. Desire is not to be simplified as a constant search for pleasure. The difficulties that society puts on everyone aren't intrinsically experienced as unwanted situations. But the acknowledgment of this is difficult. In a perverse way Jean-François Lyotard theorized how something like the subordination workers go through can be experienced as an enjoyment, a desire. Instead of condemning these types of enjoyments in capitalism, Lyotard opposed left intellectuals for situating themselves,

“on the most despicable side, the moralistic side where you desire that our capitalized’s desire be totally ignored, forbidden, brought to a standstill, you are like priests with sinners, our servile intensities frighten you, you have to tell yourselves: how they must suffer to endure that!”²

In doing so he tries to dismiss the idea that there is an outside of capitalism, something he calls the “phantasy of a non-alienated region”³. We can’t escape this system and shouldn’t spill energy in the idea that we can return to a peaceful utopia where this reality doesn’t count. This sentiment was also illustrated by Bernadette Corporation in their film ‘Get Rid of Yourself’:

“They say, “another world is possible.” But I am another world. Am I possible? I am here, living, stealing, doing cocaine, subtracting myself from the bad movie of urban love stories, inventing weapons, elaborating the complex constellation of my relations, building the Party. They say “another world is possible.” But we do not want another world, another order, another justice: another logical nightmare. We do not want any global governance be it fair, be it ecological, be it certified by Porto Allegre. We want THIS world. We want this world as chaos. We want the chaos of our lives, the chaos of our perceptions, the chaos of our desires and repulsions. The chaos that happens when management collapses. Capitalism defeated traditional societies because it was more exciting than they were, but now there is something more exciting than Capitalism, itself: its destruction.”⁴

Letting “go of the distinction of what is the pleasure in desire and in suffering”⁵, brings about a new perspective. Understanding that desire is more than the move from pain to pleasure reveals how meaning can be found within struggle. And it is in these moments of struggle or obstruction, where emotions flare high, that the notions of desire are challenged. In Heiner Mühlmann’s theory Maximum Stress Cooperation (MSC) the formation of cultures is understood through moments of stress. The theory consists of two theses. First: It describes cultures as polarized systems with a protected inside and an aggressive

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outside. Second: It claims cultures evolve in oscillating manner between periods of Maximum Stress Cooperation and periods of relaxation and re-evaluation. The periods of stress cause the formation of new rules within the addressed culture. But they depend on how they're processed in the relaxation periods. In these periods a new rule setting will occur. It depends solely on the individuals' subjective assessment of the MSC period what the perspective on the outcome of the MSC period will be. In an iterative process these periods will follow after another. The attacks on the culture in the periods of stress can either be from real or created enemies. This again depends on the individual's perception. The entanglement between external stress and internal relaxation come together in one whole where the MSC event is followed by a modification of the cultural constitution. War and cocooning are seen as two sides of the same coin.⁶ When applied to an increasingly individualized society, moments of stress, or obstruction, could create the consciousness needed to encourage the formation of personal understanding. The impact on- and the perception of the individual created by these moments of stress challenge the perspective on the desirability of obstructions.

Still 'Get Rid of Yourself', directed
by Bernadette Corporation.
37/20.



Moving from one period to another, the moments of MSC and relaxation cause a transmission of culture that happens horizontally, within one generation, and vertically, between different generations. Architecture could be an active part in these moments of cultural transmission, with obstructions as its medium. The landscapes or routes that lie within architecture, behind the facade, house this transmission.⁷ This type of Obstructing Architecture is under pressure as nations, companies, etc. are increasingly trying to smooth out realities' appearance. In 'Exit- Architecture Design Between War and Peace' Stephan Trüby elaborates on MSC and connects it to the example of the Jamarat Bridge in Mina near Mecca. The adaptation of the Bridge, which facilitates "the stoning of the devil" during the Hajj, is an example of the disappearance of Obstructing Architecture. A necessary and more safe version of the infrastructure was erected after years of impactful problems. The pillars to be stoned were widened and the structure was divided into multiple floors with a width of 100 meters and a length of 600 meters. But in this more efficient completion of the pilgrimage the moments of obstruction disappear, and the undertaking loses parts of its abilities in cultural transmission.⁸ It is a diversion from what Heiner Mühlmann calls 'culturally organised extreme emotions'⁹. The 'episodic memory' suffers from the neglectance of obstructions, Trüby observes. This is the memory that remembers content but also the place of transmission of the memory. "Stress" is the driving motor for the episodic memory. In contrast to trauma which has as an amnesic effect, a stress event is fundamentally memory facilitating."¹⁰ The remembrance of place and content are enabled by the stress happening during moments of MSC. In this sense OA appears to be an ally of AMC. Even in the more banal everyday situations there's an increased undervaluing of the obstruction and a controlled disruption of the journey. The inexhaustible urge for efficiency and improvement in a techno-capitalist society lead to a more fluid experience of the surroundings. A computerized worldview where "lags" and "glitches" are banned takes hold of how reality is perceived. Everything must be at hand at any time, every journey must be uninterrupted at any place.

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“Today, our online interactions, our search results, our music, our shopping, our hiring practices are all mediated by the feedback loop of increasingly powerful AI. The effect that this has had on us personally is to become acclimated to a permanent disorientation, a fluidity of place and position. When there’s no fixed place to stand, when the landscape is different at every moment for every person, then we, the users, are positioned to feel passive, immobile, and distinct, islands in a roaring stream of data.”¹¹



Janarit Bridge (2007), Mina, Saudi Arabia.

The obstacles only remain where their dissolution can be commodified. “Free to use” streaming services that are periodically interrupted by excessively loud commercial breaks illustrate this implemented ‘obstructed user experience’. Or VIP passes for amusement parks that diminish waiting time and create a constant flow of fun within the constructed reality. The lasting memory is replaced by a saturation of non-impacting micro enjoyments. Stressless scrolling alternates with an unconscious impression of the surroundings.

The deliberate creation of an Obstructing Architecture could enforce the process of Accelerated Memory Construction. As the obstruction, the stress, that occurs stimulates a break wherein

consciousness surfaces, they are two parts of one whole. It is a being able to freeze things that are in motion and stipulate the conditions of that moment. Through the fictionalization of the event in OA a new layer of control over the moment helps the development of AMC. OA is a produced reality wherein the obstruction takes place which is documented and reproduced in a progressed way through AMC.¹² A merging is aspired of the different kinds of reality and/or fiction that lean on the meaning the memories inside of them bring about.

Obstructing Architecture

NOTES

- 1 Mark Fisher, *Post Capitalist Desire* (London: Repeater Books, 2021), 205.
- 2 Ibid., 204.
- 3 Ibid., 193.
- 4 *Get Rid Of Yourself*, directed by Bernadette Corporation (2003, United States, France: ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX), internet.
- 5 Mark Fisher, *Post Capitalist Desire*, 205.
- 6 Heiner Mühlmann, *Darwin - Kalter Krieg - Weltwirtschaftskrieg: Das Aussterben des amerikanischen imperium* (Wilhelm Fink, 2009), 50-55.
- 7 Stephan Trüby, *Exit-Architecture Design Between War and Peace* (Vienna: Springer, 2008), 25.
- 8 Ibid., 89.
- 9 Ibid., 10.
- 10 Ibid., 16.
- 11 Jacob Hurwitz-Goodman, “The Day Facebook Ruined the Internet”, *New York Times Opinion*, 9 June, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000007785730/facebook-news-feed-zuckerberg.html?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email.
- 12 Pierre Huyghe, “Pierre Huyghe in “Romance” - Season 4 - “Art in the Twenty-First Century” | Art21”, Art 21, 5 April, 2024, YouTube video, 15:35, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syEhEFkOFR4>.

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Apple Spinning Pinwheel (OSX El Capitan)

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Erwin Wurm, Narrow House (2010).

17:43

Vertrek

Uur	Bestemming	Trein	Spoor	Vertrg	Uu
17:09	De Panne Kortrijk La Panne Courtrai	IR 4	+0H40	17:	
17:09	Charleroi-Z Jemeppe-s-S Charleroi-S Jemeppe-s-S	P 6	***	17:	
	Vertraging te bepalen				17:
	Retard à préciser				17:
17:12	Oostende Ostende	P 4	+0H30	17:	
17:18	Doornik Moeskroen Tournai Mouscron	P 2	+0H34	17:	
17:19	Brussel-Zuid Bruxelles-Midi	IC 6	+0H29	17:	
17:21	Knokke Blankenberge	IC 4	+0H29	17:	
17:25	Kortrijk Gooik	IR 6	+0H20	17:	
17:26	Bergeren	IC 2	+0H17	17:	
17:27	Aalst	R 4	+0H12	17:	
17:29	Charleroi	6	+0H15	17:	

RailTim

Départ

	Bestemming	Trein	Spoor	Vertrg
13:33	Brussel-Zuid Bruxelles-Midi	IC	4	+OH13
13:35	Nijvel♦Nivelles	IR	6	+OH16
13:36	La Louvière-C Binche	IR	4	+OH06
13:39	s-Gravenbrakel Braine-le-Ct	L	4	+OH14
13:39	Oostende♦Ostende	P	2	+OH20
13:42	Mechelen Turnhout Malines Turnhout	IC	5	+OH21
13:42	Gent-Damp Sint-Niklaas Gand-Damp Saint-Nicolas	P	4	
13:42	Jette Aalst♦Jette Alost	P	1	
13:42	Bergen Quévy♦Mons Quévy	P	2	+OH13
13:43	Landen	P	3	
13:45	Zottegem	P	2	+OH10
13:46	Louvain-la-N	L	3	
13:46	Doornik Moeskroen Tournai Mouscron	P	6	+OH11
13:47	Antwerpen-C Anvers-Central	L	5	

ne

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Queue for the lying-in-state of Elizabeth II, dubbed “The Great Queue” (2022).



STOP
DE
GENOCIDE



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Flooded Robert Smithson, Broken Circle / Spiral Hill
in Emmen, Netherlands (1971).

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The Post Olympic Tourist Trap©

The research of the SURFACE SCAN, the experience of the SPEED TRIP and the creation of ‘Accelerated Memory Construction’ and ‘Obstructing Architecture’ led to the search for a project in which to experiment with and test the theory. Keeping close contact with previous encounters during the process of this thesis an interesting case was found in the Olympic Games. Throughout the following chapter a future Brussels Olympics 2036 is envisioned that serves as a backdrop for the creation of a storyline that builds on the previous chapters’ knowledge. First the Olympic Games are studied to form a better understanding of what they mean in relation to the context of this thesis, then this research is put into contact with the created theories, and at last a script is presented in which the insights of the previous chapters come together. This script then serves as a guide to create a film, which is the artistic representation of this thesis and will be shown during the jury presentation.

CASE: Brussels Olympics 2036 (BX36)

The Olympic Games are a mega-event focused on broadcasting its action. A long tradition in different media, from live television and documentaries to more recently the internet and social media has become the International Olympic Comity’s (IOC) tool to spread their values of ‘excellence, respect and friendship’¹ and to protect and control their image. The real-world implications of the games depend on how its virtual reality is expressed. Besides media, architecture has played a big part in the image making of the Olympics. The buildings it occupies during its two week stretch every four years, are a temporary backdrop for its documented reality. This reality, captured through cameras, drones, phones etc., is what is shown to the outside world, and is what remains in the memory of its audience of billions. In this allegiance the fastness of media and the slowness of architecture

collide. An accelerated version of architecture tries to keep up with the pace of the capitalist structure that's backing the Olympic Games. Large investments by private parties and governments attempt to keep an image alive which they hope is multi-beneficial. The economic return on investment, clashes with the human return on investment, clashes with the representational return on investment. A rhizome of forces trying to pull profit their way causes the events' troubling legacy. Covered up by a strong image built up through many years and happily consumed by its audience the Olympic Games live on and impacts its changing hosts in a seemingly undisturbed way.

From its beginnings the Olympic Games became a play on depicting an image. When Pierre de Coubertin revived the event in a new modern form in 1896 Athens, an idealistic, "philosophy of life that combines the qualities of body, will and mind. [That] seeks to create a way of life based on the pleasure that comes with effort, the educational value of good example, and respect for universal ethical principles"², was already part of what it tried to express. The birth of cinema at the end of the 19th century happened concurrently with the rebirth of the Olympics. As did the excavation of a large part of the ancient Greek ruins. A new European identity emerged that could connect its heritage to some of the oldest examples of modern civilization on European soil. The original Olympic site being one of them. During the first few editions of the modern Olympics, image progressively took on a more important role. Photographs documented the first edition in Athens and moving pictures were already filmed at the second edition in Paris. Athletes became film actors within a worldwide media spectacle.

The 'tests' the athletes performed in front of an audience of sport experts, like referees and judges, is according to Benjamin similar to the movie actor doing his acting performance in front of a crowd of film experts, like directors and sound engineers. The mechanized equipment recording them creates an experiment-like environment in which they act.³ This image making practice was gratefully incorporated by the Nazi-German government during their uprising in the 1930's. The 1936 Olympics were the first Games to be broadcast on television,

Athlete as actor performing tests in front of the camera.
Motion photograph by Eadward Muybridge.



although to a limited extend.⁴ But most notably Leni Riefenstahl's 'Olympia' was filmed, a three-and-a-half-hour documentary divided in part 1: Fest der Volker and part 2: Fest der Schönheit. The film became the vessel for Nazi propaganda. In 1938 it came out and "later that year Olympia was the principal German entry at the Venice Film Festival, where it won the Gold Medal"⁵. It depicts the 11th Olympic games, held in Berlin. After the war and in her later life Riefenstahl tried to distance her film from its context, wherein it was financed by the Nazi-government, and dismisses it as her search for beauty:

"I can simply say that I feel spontaneously attracted by everything that is beautiful. Yes: beauty, harmony. And perhaps this care for composition, this aspiration to form is in effect something very German. But I don't know these things myself, exactly. It comes from the unconscious and not from my knowledge ... Whatever is purely realistic, slice-of-life, which is average, quotidian, doesn't interest me ... I am fascinated by what is beautiful, strong, healthy, what is living. I seek harmony. When harmony is produced I am happy."⁶

In this quote she remarks that she has no interest in “whatever is purely realistic, slice-of-life, which is average, quotidian”. It is the beauty that drives her. As harmless this may seem, her self-proclaimed ideals were the perfect ally of the Nazi-regime, and she cooperated in the creation of their image. The aesthetics of fascism were incorporated and compatible with Riefenstahl’s aesthetics of physical perfection. In her far-reaching efforts to get the shots she wanted, “Riefenstahl transformed the Olympiastadion (Olympic Studium) into a Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (UFA film studio) and the athletes into actors to make this dramatic film”⁷. Despite her troubled political entanglements, the film is considered a leading example of documentary filmmaking and the depiction of sports. She impacted cinema and directors for many years to come.

Kon Ichikawa’s ‘Tokyo Olympiad’ depicting the 1964 Olympics was directly influenced by Riefenstahl’s methods. Not interested in sports before his involvement in the film, Ichikawa saw the Olympics as a moment where human beings create culture. He was not looking to show the event in the most ‘real’ way. “An important feature of his

Leni Riefenstahl, Olympia: Festival of Nations.
Film Still 23:27 (1938).



work is its artificiality. His filmmaking is “to stare at the truth, then to remake it into a tsukurimono (artificial creation) and to present it to spectators to enjoy”.⁸ Following Riefenstahl’s example, Ichikawa transformed the Japanese Olympic stadiums into film studios wherein the athletes became actors. He started the process of making the film with creating a precise and detailed scenario. This scenario was published in a Japanese film magazine with a revealing introduction:

“This film is a pure record but not just a record. Recently, people have become addicted to reality... We must crush the belief that “the truth is genuine, the artificial is fake” which lingers at the back of everyone’s mind ... This is because the Olympic Games are manifestations of human dreams ... Let’s nourish our weak minds. Let’s raise imagination up, remake dreams as reality, lies as truth, and the real as fiction ... We do not merely make this film as an accurate record. We create this film. We hope this scenario will be the first step in this creation. And, for the spectators of this film, the greatness and sadness of human beings.”⁹

Regardless of Riefenstahl’s and Ichikawa’s shared method of creation, the acceptance of their work is different. Both films are praised for their beauty and style but the political context wherein the films were made cause a hesitant adoption of Riefenstahl’s work. Nevertheless, Ichikawa also portrays the political ideals of the regime he was part of. D.P. Martinez points this out in a comparing study focused on the two films:

“Olympic films well document the fact that all sporting festivals, all Olympic events, no matter who is holding them, can only ever be evasive myths* about the happy, productive, well-organized modern nation state and its peaceful incorporation into the world order. Their filmic legacy is to leave us with a record not just of sporting wins (and losses), but also of a nation-state’s desire to impress and overwhelm, to silence its critics and to be seen to belong.”¹⁰

* “An evasive myth is escapism masquerading as unflinching realism, yet it represents the world as we wish it were, not as it is. Ideologically, Olympic documentary film as evasive myth represents the state at its imagined best: unified, functioning, modern and politically correct.”

Tokyo Olympiad (1969) storyboard by Ken Ichikawa for the women's 800 m final.
Made before filming the event.



In this way both documentaries are equally productive in the creation of image, and in the formation of memories through this image. But as media evolves, the documentary format loses influence and a more direct connection with the event is searched for. Today, live broadcasting constitutes the main depiction of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) is a centralized organ owned by the IOC that, as their own website introduction proclaims:

“produces the live television, radio and digital coverage of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. [Their] coverage is neutral, favouring no particular country or athlete, and includes sports competitions as

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well as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The International Olympic Committee established OBS to serve as the permanent host broadcaster for the Games, eliminating the need to continually rebuild the broadcast operation for each edition, and as a result create a more efficient, streamlined operation. This continuity allows [them] to maintain the highest Olympic broadcast standards from Games to Games.”¹¹

The OBS has the monopoly on the recording of sports coverage during the Olympics. They provide this coverage to the Media Rights Holders (MRHs) who pay for the exclusive rights to distribute the coverage of the Olympic Games. The MRHs are provided with designated tv studio areas in the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) where they can personalize the images they’ll broadcast in their home countries. It’s a powerful organ which lobbies its will through local restrictions. Accounting for 60-65% of the IOC’s revenue it’s a main part of the Games’ economy.¹² OBS repetitively puts attention to their ‘unbiased’ and ‘neutral’ delivery of the footage. They claim to have no hand in a deliberate creation of the images, breaking ties with a long Olympic

Main Press Center (MPC) next to International Broadcasting Center (IBC) in Rio De Janeiro, the headquarters of the Olympic Broadcasting Center (OBS).



tradition. But recently “The International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, Thomas Bach, and the China Media Group (CMG) President, Shen Haixiong, have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations”¹³. The government owned CMG, comprised of different former Chinese media providers including CCTV, is continually gaining importance within the Olympic broadcasting organization. Among other tasks, CMG will, on behalf of the OBS, provide international signal for four sports during the Paris Olympics: gymnastics, table tennis, badminton, and sport climbing.¹⁴ It’s a particular choice of partnership, as China’s troubling influence in global media and their control and blockage concerning the international coverage of inland human rights problems, is continually being contested worldwide. This example allows a jump to another recent problem the Olympic Games is dealing with. Enrolment of AI security systems in Paris are welcomed with hesitation. The system claims to not use facial recognition but still is an invasion of the public sphere. In its first phase it will be put in place from the start of the 2024 Games up until 2025. But locals fear its extension. The state of exception during the Olympics is used to install a system which would find more counteraction in a normal situation.¹⁵ These large security endeavors, common in modern day sport events, seemingly turn around the spectator-game relation. The tables are turned and the audience becomes the aim of the camera. Despite the claim no data will be shared, the further development of AI systems through the large amounts of data they collect creates a questionable future development of public control through images. Media is the main ally of the Olympics in building their own world. They hammer on their neutral stance but continually show how they influence the image that is portrayed to the outside. Through media they create this image, behind which they can hide the problems that they produce.

“In a way, the Olympics have become more of a made-for-TV event than one that brings the experience to host-city locals”¹⁶, says Jules Boykoff. As self-proclaimed by the Olympic Committee’s marketing department, they’re one of the most effective international marketing platforms in the world. 219 million tv-viewers for the

London 2012 Olympics, 200 million for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016. All platforms combined about 1.92 billion people watch a single Olympic Games. As the IOC expanded its media presence, ‘The Olympic Channel’ an online addition to the Olympic universe was launched right after Rio, there’s continually more room being created for advertisement and image building.¹⁷ Boykoff created the term ‘Celebration Capitalism’ to theorize the relation between capitalism and the games. It builds on Naomi Klein’s term ‘Disaster Capitalism’. Klein’s theory observes that in moments where, “the disorientation of rapid political change combined with the collective fear generated by an economic meltdown”¹⁸ occur, the vulnerability of the population is abused. The state is weakened, neoliberal privatization is pushed through using public money and its existence normalized “to convert government responsibilities into corporate functions”¹⁹. Moments of Maximal Stress Cooperation (MSC), as seen in the previous chapters, which are possible transmitters of cultural knowledge, are exploited to generate economic profit for a select group of people.²⁰ The form of capitalism Boykoff observes in relation to the Olympics, Celebration Capitalism, is according to him focused less on neoliberalism and more on the machinations of capitalism, which are manipulative strategies, actions, and mechanisms through which the capitalist system operates. ‘Six essential elements’ of Celebration Capitalism are recorded by Boykoff:

“First, it occurs during a state of celebratory exception where the normal rules of politics can be temporarily suspended. Second, the IOC and the mass media combine as a linchpin in creating and trumpeting a political-economic spectacle. A third dimension is festive commoditization that rallies public backing for the Games. Fourth, celebration capitalism depends on public-private partnerships that are lopsided in favor of private entities in terms of input and risk. Fifth, celebration capitalism is buoyed by the feel-good claims of environmental and social sustainability, although follow-through is often weak. Finally, celebration capitalism uplifts the security industry and local policing units responsible for preventing terrorism, corralling political dissent, and safeguarding the festive spectacle.”²¹

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Disaster Capitalism and Celebration Capitalism joined forces. The strong bond between the two caused the depletion of money and human resources which could have helped the survivors of the 2011 tsunami with recovering and rebuilding their homes. “this Olympics is literally taking the money, workers, and cranes away from the areas where they are needed most”²², said professor of sport, gender and sexuality studies at Kansai University Satoki Itani about it. The increasing commercialization of the games became apparent in the Tokyo Olympics of 1964 and were visible in Ichikawa’s film. The totalitarian propaganda Riefenstahl showed in her movie changed into a representation of commercialism, the new national ideology of Japan. To obtain extra funding Ichikawa even included athletes drinking Coca-Cola and journalists using an Olivetti typewriter.

Athlete drinking Coca-Cola in Tokyo Olympiad
Film Still 01:11:49 (1965)



“Ichikawa happened to be filming Olympic Games that were gradually commercialized. The commercialization of the Olympic Games—cultural commodification and corporate sponsorship—began to expand and the relationship between mega-events, nationalism, and commercialism was transformed radically since the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984. ... the emergence of commercialization of the Olympic Games initially took place in Tokyo Olympiad.”²³

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Multinational corporations began to use the Olympics to cross borders and expand their economic activities. Nations became less important but the image making lived on with the help of this new partner. The constant correlation between image and reality occupies almost all the Olympics' actions. The strong façade it has built for itself is able to hide away most disadvantageous extremities. When problems do rise to the surface, the spectacles' brightness overrules dissatisfactions. But criticism is building up and the Olympic Games is held accountable for the problems it creates more often than it would like. The enthusiasm with host cities is decreasing. Overspending, white-elephant venues, militarization of the public sphere, eviction and gentrification, and greenwashing are themes now inextricably connected to the Games, and they're known by the bigger public.²⁴ The attempts to shake them off are often unsuccessful. With the Paris Olympics the IOC is trying to connect their image so close to the city that they deliberately disappear behind Paris' monuments and lights. More temporarily used venues, renovations of existing buildings and the few new stadiums that are built are located in troubled neighborhoods.²⁵ Not a new backdrop is constructed but an existing strong city brand is used to polish the Olympic image. Still, the well-known issues are slowly emerging. Costs are rising, and taxpayers' money is used to fund the anticipated 10 billion euros 'cheap' Olympics.²⁶ Already about 12.500 people were 'erased' to make room for the marvels of the spectacle.²⁷ When the Olympics pass by, the image prevails.

Paris as a backdrop for the Games.
Render of the Eiffel Tower Stadium for
Paris 2024.



In ‘Olympia (The real time disintegration into ruins of the Berlin Olympic stadium over the course of a thousand years)’ artist David Claerbout creates,

“a computer-generated replica of the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, which finds itself in a time-space devoid of human intervention and entrusted to the cycles of nature. Following the original ‘ruinenwert’ theory, which pre-incorporated the stadium’s own decay, Olympia evokes a cycle from creation to dissolution by the slow force of nature.”²⁸

David Claerbout, Olympia (The real time disintegration into ruins of the Berlin Olympic stadium over the course of a thousand years) start 2016, two channel real-time projection, color, silent, HD animation, 1000 years



Claerbouts’ work depicts the long-term legacy of the building that was envisioned by architect Albert Speer. A troubling connection between history, the present and the future is shown through the collision of the human lifespan (biological duration) and ideological time (imaginary duration). Speer designed the stadium for the Nazi-German Olympic Games of 1936 with his “Theory of Ruin Value” in mind. In his memoir he explained the becoming of his theory and its adoption by Adolf Hitler as follows:

“The building on the Zeppelin Field was begun at once, in order to have at least the platform ready for the coming Party Rally. To clear ground for it, the Nuremberg streetcar depot had to be removed. I passed

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by its remains after it had been blown up. The iron reinforcements protruded from concrete debris and had already begun to rust. One could easily visualize their further decay. This dreary sight led me to some thoughts which I later propounded to Hitler under the pretentious heading of "A Theory of Ruin Value." The idea was that buildings of modern construction were poorly suited to form that "bridge of tradition" to future generations which Hitler was calling for. It was hard to imagine that rusting heaps of rubble could communicate these heroic inspirations which Hitler admired in the monuments of the past. My "theory" was intended to deal with this dilemma. By using special materials and by applying certain principles of statics, we should be able to build structures which even in a state of decay, after hundreds or (such were our reckonings) thousands of years would more or less resemble Roman models."²⁹

Drawing by Albert Speer, 1940–50 Columns of the Volkshalle as ruins.



The impact the buildings would have in the future were of an ideological kind. It was their attempt to consider themselves descendants of their Roman ideal. A connection was sought that went so far as to even reconcile with the debris that was left over from fallen Roman

empire. Not the imagined ideal wherein all these great buildings were in perfect shape but the contemporary degradation and their love for this sight became a depiction to aspire. They seemingly tried to project themselves into a future where their remains would be cheered for as much as they are impressed by the Roman ruins' greatness. This romantic ideal of the ruin was already expressed in the folies of the 18th century English garden or by John Ruskin in his 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture'. The 18th century nation states' obsession with history creation evolved into an imagined future that could already look back on or look like a 'real' history. It is a form of legacy creation with a considerable impact as it tries to control not only its own time but also its future image. Architecture is used as a vessel in which politics and power come to the forefront. The idea of an infinite present only stalls culture and blocks any imagined alternative. As Mark Fisher points out: "Tradition counts for nothing when it is no longer contested and modified. A culture that is merely preserved is no culture at all."³⁰ It is an evolution that still haunts architecture today, although in a progressed way. For Rem Koolhaas preservation served as, "a way out of the "grotesque, exaggerated form of involuntary newness" that was the standard starchitectural response to "the market's" demands for instantly iconic buildings"³¹. A way to reconsider history as an intricate part of architecture. But this too evolved into exaggerated forms says Koolhaas:

"We are living in an incredibly exciting and slightly absurd moment, namely that preservation is overtaking us. Maybe we can be the first to actually experience the moment that preservation is no longer a retroactive activity but becomes a prospective activity. This makes perfect sense because it is clear that we built so much mediocrity that it is literally threatening our lives. Therefore, we will have to decide in advance what we are going to build for posterity sooner or later."³²

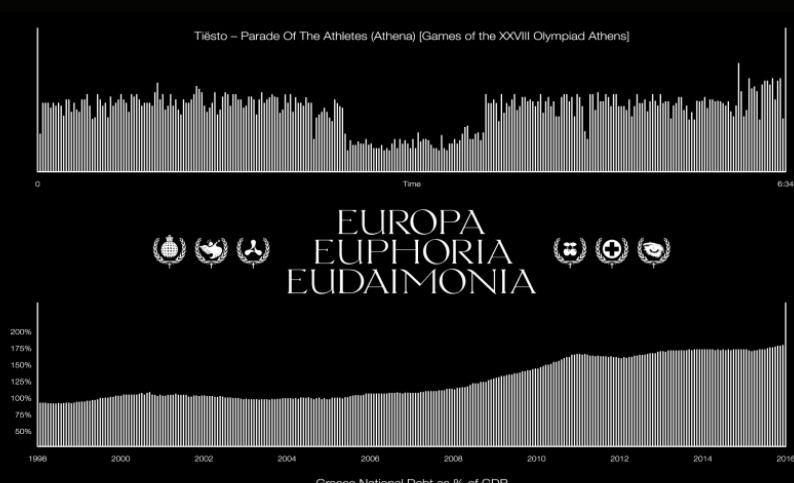
The way the Olympic Games uses architecture to form an image, overrules architecture's abilities to create lasting and valuable local implications. Buildings designed to instantly be iconic or instantly be a part of world history aren't concerned with the reality that unfolds

The Post Olympic Tourist Trap

after their render is publicly shared.³³ The troubled relation between the Olympic Games and its real-world legacy is made tangible through the architecture it produces. From urban planning to single buildings, economics and image tend to absorb all the attention, diminishing local benefits. As an example, much of Santiago Calatrava's grotesque stadiums in Athens weren't suitable for a life after the 2004 Games. Athens too tried to use the Olympics and a world-renowned name in architecture to boost their own image in an accelerated way. As expressed on Calatrava's website, architecture is given a large influence on the success of the event and its ability to create change:

"... rumors of catastrophic failures, including fears of a terrorist attack persisted throughout the construction and continued until the last days leading up to the opening ceremonies. This turned the Athens Olympics into the most costly and security-conscious games in modern history. On August 13, 2004, however, anxiety gave way to celebration when the Olympic torch reached the Olympic Stadium, designed by Calatrava, ... The return of the Olympics to Athens, and the most successful Paralympic Games that followed it, were unanimously declared a success, and a major contribution to this success was Calatrava's architecture."³⁴

David Riednick & Evian Christ, Trans Wars (1998-Ongoing).



In the end everything seemingly turned out fine and instead of a terrorist attack they all danced to Tiësto's legendary stadium DJ-performance. A short-term Olympic vision which focusses on the two weeks in which the whole world is looking at their broadcasting is unable to take into account what happens when the party is over. A ruin is not considered in the future but unfolds shortly after the buildings' implication. The problem resurfaces when the large maintenance costs for the main Athens Olympic stadiums' complex roof structure causes an early closure. An additional annual investment of 10 million euros to the 130 million building cost was never done, due to lack of funds and will. The modern-day ruin is complete and made inaccessible by the danger it entails.³⁵ Even the 2012 games in London, which had a legacy plan from its conception, had a hard time balancing profit driven initiatives and local development. When trying to keep up, the slow pace of architecture and building community seem to be irreconcilable with the speed of development.³⁶ Nevertheless, history is already created and the memory of the Olympics lasts through the logo's, mascot's and opening ceremonies. Once a podium is used, the next one must be found and constructed. It could be a newly developed park as was the case in London, or a whole city as we'll see in Paris. They form the physical backdrop that covers up the underlying entanglements related to the Games' conception.

As shown by Takeshi Nakaji the public memory of the Tokyo Olympics of 1964 was "constructed via the mediated images of Ichikawa's artificial creation"³⁷. The experience of people is not their own. Through images they share a nationwide memory. Alison Landsberg calls this a 'prosthetic memory'. Mass media and cinema can create people's memories, even if they have not lived them. Reality and image overlap and merge to become one in the mind of the viewer. The difference between mediated and unmediated memories disappears. Not only a new memory is created, an old one can also be replaced. The screen memory, defined by Sigmund Freud, hides "another memory that the subject does not wish to recollect"³⁸. Tokyo Olympiad became this screen memory for the Japanese population. The negative impact the Olympic Games in 1964 had, was covered up by the vibrant moving images seen in Tokyo Olympiad. It possibly

even created the positive public sentiment towards the initiation of the disastrous Tokyo 2020 event. “the function of cinema and mass media in our public memory and its culture” is made apparent by Ishikawa’s film and its impact. The Olympic Games continually uses this image making strategy to hide behind.³⁹ It’s a continuous series of events where the next one replaces the previous’ negative impact. Only the positive memory is kept alive and made into after movies and archive webpages.

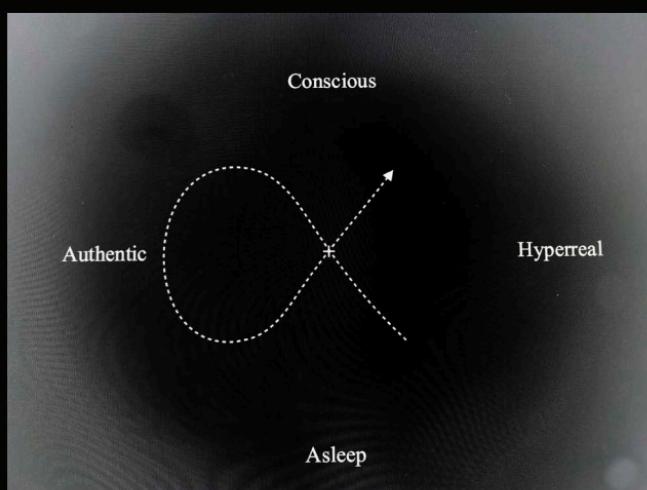
Sports, and the myth that surrounds it, is one of the most straightforward examples of an obstacle-filled-journey. From the mental blockade during a marathon to the life journey of famous athletes, almost everything connected to sports follows the same ideological path of battling and overcoming desire and defying the laws of reality. It is a mentality much appreciated by the capitalist world of strength and personal gain. And it’s illustrated excessively in mass media and adopted as a mantra by a public mesmerized by its own image. Walter Benjamin sees similarities between the creation of film and competitive sports.

“the film actor’s performance is produced in a mechanized test, whereas the athlete is normally confronted only by a natural test; that is, the athlete measures himself against tasks set by nature, not by equipment. However, Benjamin emphasizes, that athletes who “run against the clock,” ..., are an exception. This is because in sports competitions like the Olympic Games, where athletes aim to set new athletic records, human bodies are confronted with the metric system and mechanical equipment such as clocks. Thus, the Olympic athletes compete in mechanized tests analogous to what film actors undergo.”⁴⁰

The hurdles, the water, the opponent, ... they all create the fiction of a struggle that must be overcome. Real or unreal, the individual accepts the test in which they are put and tries to finish it with success. Through these obstructions the experience becomes real and the unreality that is its context is covered up. The hyperreality of obstructions creates new memories which are shared between the individual and the collective through mass media.

The IOC is heavily concerned with the legacy of their image, control of public memory, and representation through mass media. On top of that, the event is a series of documented tests that replicate the experience of struggles and obstructions. The Olympic Games is a hyperreal environment where individual and collective desires are challenged. It serves as a fitting backdrop to test out the theories composed in the previous chapters. In the following chapter the script unfolds. It tries to use theory, experience, and reference to create a story which represents the insights and questions that were researched in this thesis and led to a film that further elaborates this representation. Personal memories are used to create new ones. The Olympics as a backdrop, is combined with the lived experience of the SPEED TRIP and relocated to the city of Brussels. Again, the graph that helped guide the first two chapters is used in an evolved way. As was the case during the SPEED TRIP, 3 locations on the graph, or 3 locations in real life, create the path that is followed, with an aim to obtain knowledge about the 4th and last location, being the ‘Hyperreal Consciousness’. A mental journey in which insights surface is made tangible through text and images. An Obstructing Architecture is depicted which provokes the realization of an underlying reality and challenges the relation to desire. With Accelerated Memory Construction the memory of the audience is addressed and supplemented to create a sped-up formation of a new reality.

Graphic representation of the mental journey,
along the Studio Snwoflake 2024 Graph.



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Still: “The Post Olympic Tourist Trap” Intro.

SCRIPT: “THE POST OLYMPIC TOURIST TRAP”

[0. Preface]

When I was talking to a chatbot I’m friends with, a trip I took in 2038 came up. I went on a short visit to Brussels, which hosted the Olympic Games two years earlier. Nevertheless, it went through a bankruptcy in that same period. I started to vaguely remember the trip but was unable to retrace what had happened. Did I stay 3 days or just 3 hours? Did I visit 3 floors or 3 scenes? The bot offered me some possible scenarios that could’ve happened, but they didn’t feel quite right. Later that day I searched for my old cloud password and reopened notes from back then. To my surprise I had written down a few key moments. Additionally, I found some pictures I made during the trip. With these bits and pieces, we could retrace my steps.

[1. Giftshop (SOLD OUT!)]

A long line of people is standing outside urgently waiting to get in. I have no choice but join as I’m automatically pushed forward by the stream of people behind me. When nearing the entrance, a sign reads: “Smile you’re being filmed!”. Entry is free in exchange for my name and email address. I comply and walk through a blazing air-conditioning which invisibly separates the inside from the outside.

The structure was created inside Brussels’ old administrative center, “Brucity”. Maintenance costs became too high, and the city sold parts of their building to private investors. While scouting for possible locations the International Olympic Comity (IOC) saw their chance and took it. They constructed a gift-shopping experience bathing in artificial sunlight. Glass panels structured the space, creating a closed path that felt open. Transparent floors let the light shine through into the space underneath which required a sensitive lighting scheme.

In the cramped pathway I can barely raise my arms. A weird odor of fast-food, sweat and perfume fill the room. If I try to stop, the stream of people immediately crushes me. Behind the glass panels I only see other squashed visitors. Where are the gifts? Is it just the shopping, without the buying?

After the games the space remained attractive for tourists as it lured them in with long waiting lines and clever marketing strategies. A new revenue model was found in the visitors' personal information. Through illusions of merchandise and objects, the memory of the audience was directed. A way to keep control over image and client.

The pressure is suffocating. I keep getting smashed into the glass panels smeared with greasy stains and dripping with water from the condensed breath-air building up in the room. The bright light blinds me as I look for a way out. I manage to get to the outer ring of the stream. Touching the wall, I find a door handle. When I push it open, I fall into an office space. Other people fall on top of me but get back up and squeeze their way inside. I close the door and catch my breath.

[2. Heritage Site *Under Construction]

Glad I escaped the gift shop I find a backdoor that didn't fell into its lock. When entering the space, water is pouring from above. I'm getting soaked immediately. The inclined floor is covered in moss and dirt which has become muddy. Worn out paths leading upward have formed through the vegetation. I look up ahead and see how the hill seems to go on endlessly.

During the Olympic Games ceremonies were held here. The place was meant to depict the landscape and atmosphere of the original Olympic site. A large boulder was shipped from

Greece as a replacement for the Olympic fire. Polluting emission and fire's destructive nature motivated the choice for a more calm and lasting symbol. A native Greek climate and biotope were reenacted to complete the scenery.

My feet get wet through my mud-covered shoes. The slope is slippery, and my hands are dirty from multiple attempts to stay on my feet. Moist air blurs my vision. I keep walking head down up the hill until I bump into a wall. It's hidden behind a banner depicting a continuation of the hill. I decide to follow it to see if the wall opens up.

When the games ended it became clear that the weight of the boulder was underestimated. Precautions had to be made for a plausible partial collapse. Insurance companies condemned the space into disuse. The microclimate was kept intact in case of a possible future solution. Now, only some construction workers, and an occasional 'lost' visitor, ever sees the insides of the place. The simulation went on but became estranged from the outside world.

After walking for a while the banner is interrupted with a large triangular sticker saying: "HERITAGE SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION". A few meters further the wall runs into another, even higher wall. I'm getting cold, the water hasn't stopped from falling. With no entryway in sight, I try to take a picture raising my camera over the wall. The wet lens totally blurs and transforms the image. With no dry piece of clothing left I won't get anything better. I slip and slide my way back down and try to find an exit.

[3. (Un-)Public Pool]

I think I smell chloride. In front of a turning door there's some kind of foot bath. I decide to walk through it and get rid of some of the mud on my shoes. When going inside, the warm moist air overwhelms me. I'm still soaked and

leave behind watery footmarks on the shiny white floor. In the corner of my eye, I can see the cleaning personnel coming at me with a large mopping machine. They follow me viciously through the hall. Pool sounds coming from built in speakers louder as I make my way to the help desk.

To recycle the water used for the boulders' microclimate the Olympic pool was built underneath it. Water was purified by the moss and dripped directly into the pool. The system worked well in the first few months, but filters got jammed and had to be removed. Despite complains about the water quality nothing changed. After a while locals forgot the pool was even there.

At the desk I'm greeted with silence. When the employee notices I'm not moving past them they look up with an annoyed smile and point to a sign next to the entrance. "Easily buy your tickets online!", it says. I go to the website where a large form pops up. I fill in all personal information I've got left and press: "Buy Ticket". The website crashes. I go back to the desk and notice the employee is a service bot. "One ticket please", I say to the machine. It immediately prints out the ticket and I'm able to get in.

After the games, large public stands were dismantled and repurposed. Recuperated metal was brought to a nearby firearms factory and plastics were shipped to West-Africa. It was imagined the pool would come to serve the local community, but it didn't deliver. The fully automated system banned out any human interaction with the space.

I'm all alone. Rows of abandoned locker rooms fill up the first room. After changing into a bathing suit, I head to the showers. I close my eyes. Ice cold water pours out. When jumping back I see a brownish fluid coming from the

sprinkler. I go on to find the whole pool filled with the same murky substance. Indecisive I say to myself: “You came all this way, so you might as well swim across”. The water feels cold and tastes like dirt. As fast as I can I swim one lane back and forth. I don’t know if I feel victorious or humiliated.

[4. Postscript]

Beaten and confused I leave the city. What did I desire of this trip in the first place? Was it the pleasure I imagined or the pain I got? The environments I struggle through work against me. Still, I go on. Hoping to find something real?

The soreness is what I’m left with, and this is what I long for.



Did I stay three days



or just three hours?

Still: “The Post Olympic Tourist Trap” [Preface].



**I comply and walk the
conditions**



through a blazing air
conditioning

Still: “The Post Olympic Tourist Trap” [Gift Shop (Sold Out!)].



**It's hidden behind
depicting a continuous**



**hind a banner
nuation of the hill.**

Still: "The Post Olympic Tourist Trap" [Heritage Site *Under Construction].



I decide to walk thru
of some of the m



**rough it and get rid
mud on my shoes.**

Still: “The Post Olympic Tourist Trap” [(Un-)Public Pool].

Still, I

go on.

“I tripped over my own model.”

During the process of this thesis my own desires kept flaring up. When creating the script, a conceptual and abstract architectural representation helped visualize the journey. An idea of what an Obstructing Architecture could be, guided and made malleable the lived experience during the SPEED TRIP. It was a mental but physical representation of what the path had been or could be. In sketch phase this process proved itself to be helpful and made possible the detailed description of the architecture inside the script. My unconscious desire led me to hold tight to an all too familiar law: an architectural project produces a model. But as the script progressed into a movie and the text evolved into a theory, the model stayed the same. Inside this thesis it couldn't evolve into a newer more developed phase, as it had already played its part. The architecture illustrated in the script was represented through another medium. Film could hold together the elements needed to transfer the message intended. Still, breaking loose from nostalgia creates an eerie feeling. A continual process of understanding and challenging desire within this new reality was made tangible. The piercing of my own realities' desires was what the extended work on the model brought about. It is the concluding of this trajectory through a complicating attempt. The following images illustrate how the model was pushed to traverse meaning in a moment where it couldn't deliver new insights anymore.

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